



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

Comfortable Truths

John Brown D.D.



•

•

•

•

COMFORTABLE WORDS

FOR

BEREAVED CHRISTIAN PARENTS.

**" THEY DIED, FOR ADAM SINNED ;
THEY LIVE, FOR JESUS DIED."**

ROBINSON.

COMFORTABLE WORDS

FOR

CHRISTIAN PARENTS

BEREAVED OF LITTLE CHILDREN.

BY JOHN BROWN, D.D.,

EDINBURGH.

THIRD EDITION, ENLARGED.

EDINBURGH: A. AND D. PADON.

LONDON: HAMILTON, ADAMS, AND CO.

MDCCCLVIII.

141. Cl. 48.

the bitterness of which is known only to hearts which have felt it; and it is humbly offered to HIM who is at once THE MONITOR and THE COMFORTER, with a fervent prayer that He would employ it as a vehicle for communicating *His* instructions and consolations to such mourners, and thus make it indeed "GOOD AND COMFORTABLE WORDS."

The Author embraces this opportunity of recommending to bereaved parents the perusal of such of the following compositions as may be within their reach :—Flavel's *Token for Mourners*—Bury's *Death Improved, and Immoderate Sorrow Reproved*—Grosvenor's *Mourner*—Harris's *Consolations on the Death of Infants*—Grove's *Mourning Parent*—Doddridge *On Submission to Divine Providence in the Death of Children*—Charters' *Rachel Weeping for her Children*—Cecil's *Visit to the House of Mourning*—Lawson's *Reflections on the Death of a Daughter*—Belfrage *On the Death of Children*—Thomson's *Consolations for Christian Mourners*—Russell's *Infant Salvation*—and Somerville's *Good Shepherd's Care of the Lambs of the Flock*.

Having found these writings soothing, and, he trusts, profitable to himself in the season of trial, he is desirous that others who equally need should receive the support and comfort they are so well fitted to yield. In giving this recommendation, he feels as if he were conferring on his fellow-sufferers a favour; and he is sure that he could not testify his gratitude to the authors of these excellent works, most of them long since gone to their reward, in a more appropriate way, than by endeavouring *thus* to extend their usefulness.

J. B.

EDINBURGH, 10, GATFIELD SQUARE,
August 1846.

**"FAREWELL, THOU CHILD OF MY RIGHT HAND:—MY JOY:
FIVE YEARS THOU WERT LENT TO ME."**

JONSON.

ADVERTISEMENT TO THE THIRD EDITION.

IN giving this little book, carefully revised and somewhat enlarged, a third time to the world, I have to express my devout gratitude for every instance in which “the Comforter,” “the good Spirit,” has made it useful in ministering to the consolation of bereaved Christian parents.

The enlargement which it has received is chiefly owing to the insertion in the Appendix, of two gems, *The Mother's Lament*, by James Montgomery, and *A Letter on the Death of an Infant*, with which the author of *The Eclipse of Faith* has kindly allowed me to enrich my little volume: the improvement—to the supply of such deficiencies, and the correction of such faults as a rigid revisal has discovered.

It is my earnest prayer that the continued and enlarged blessing of the Holy Spirit, who "breatheth where he listeth," yet is "given to those who ask Him," may be vouchsafed to this edition, thus enlarged and improved,—a prayer in which I am sure of being joined by all to whom He has made these words to be "spirit and life."

"But all is in His hand whose praise I seek :
Whose frown can disappoint the proudest strain,
Whose approbation prosper even mine."
COWPER, *Task*, VII.

J. B.

ARTHUR LODGE, *June* 1858.

CONTENTS.

| | PAGE |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| INTRODUCTION, | 1 |
| PART I. | |
| THE DEATH OF INFANT CHILDREN THE CAUSE OF DEEP SORROW, | 12 |
| SECT. I.—The Death of Little Children, | 13 |
| II.—The Sorrow occasioned by the Death of Infant Children, | 20 |
| PART II. | |
| CONSOLATIONS FOR CHRISTIANS BEREAVED OF LITTLE CHILDREN, | 37 |
| SECT. I.—Consolations suggested by the Text, | 39 |
| 1. The work of the Bereaved Parent shall be re- warded, | 39 |
| 2. There is hope concerning the Departed, | 45 |
| 3. The Departed shall return from the Land of the Enemy, | 57 |
| 4. The Departed shall return to their own Border, | 63 |
| SECT. II.—Consolations from other Considerations, | 66 |
| 1. The Bereavement is the work of God, | 66 |
| 2. It has been Advantageous to our Children, | 69 |
| 3. It is fitted to be Advantageous to Ourselves, | 73 |
| 4. There is the prospect of a happy and not dis- tant re-union, | 80 |
| 5. The loss may be compensated even here, | 82 |

PART III.

| | PAGE |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| PROPER EFFECT OF THESE CONSOLATIONS, | 86 |
| SECT. I.—Negative—Not intended to produce insensibility, | 87 |
| II.—Positive—Intended to repress the excessive indulgence and unbecoming expression of sorrow, | 89 |
| CONCLUSION, | 101 |

APPENDIX.

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| BENGEI on the Death of his Children and Grandchildren, | 111 |
| DR. LAWSON'S Reflections on the Sickness and Death of a Beloved Daughter, | 121 |
| Letter on the Death of an Infant—ROGERS, | 136 |
| A Mother's Lament on the Death of an Infant Daughter—MONTGOMERY, | 142 |
| Thy Lost One—M. HOWITT, | 144 |

COMFORTABLE WORDS

FOR

BEREAVED CHRISTIAN PARENTS.

INTRODUCTION.

"THUS saith the Lord, A voice was heard in A Divine Oracle. Ramah, lamentation *and* bitter weeping ; Rachel weeping for her children, refused to be comforted for her children, because they *were* not. Thus saith the Lord, Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears : for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the Lord ; and they shall come again from the land of the enemy. And there is hope in thine end, saith the Lord, that *thy* children shall come again to their own border."¹ These striking words bring before the mind two scenes of deep and painful interest : the captivity of Judah, and the massacre at Bethlehem.

¹ Jer. xxxi. 15-17.

In reference
to the cap-
tivity of
Judah.

“I will remove Judah out of my sight,” said Jehovah, righteously displeased at the obstinate perverseness of his chosen people, “as I have removed Israel, and will cast off this city Jerusalem, which I have chosen, and the house of which I said, My name shall be there.” “The Lord is not slack” concerning such declarations, “as some men count slackness.” No. “He is not a man that he should lie, nor the son of man that he should repent.” But “he is long-suffering, not willing that any should perish, but willing that all should come to repentance.” In accordance with his character as “the Lord God, long-suffering and abundant in goodness,” He even after this declaration, sent to the doomed people “by the hand of his messengers, rising up betimes and sending, because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling-place: but they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord came against his people, and there was no remedy.”

And now came the “days of vengeance.” “He brought upon them the king of the Chaldees, and delivered them all into his hand.” “The heathen have come into the inheritance of the Lord, they have entered into his sanctuary, they have defiled

his temple, they have cast fire into the holy place," and levelled with the ground that house so "exceedingly magnificent, of fame and of glory throughout all countries." Jerusalem, "beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole land," as "a city builded compactly together," is become a heap of smoking, ensanguined rubbish. The dead bodies of Jehovah's servants have the cruel spoilers "given to be meat to the fowls of heaven, the flesh of his saints to the beasts of the earth." "Their blood have they shed like water round about Jerusalem, and there is none to bury them." "The young men they have slain with the sword, and they have had no compassion upon young man or maiden, nor on him that stooped for age." "The holy cities have become a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation ; their holy and their beautiful house where their fathers praised Jehovah has been burnt with fire, and all their pleasant things are laid waste." "Their kings, and their princes, and their mighty men of valour have been carried into captivity." They are sitting by the rivers of Babylon, weeping while they think upon Zion ; and none remain save the poorest of the inhabitants, the miserable tenants of their depopulated and desolate fatherland. "Judah has gone into captivity, she dwelleth among the

heathen. The ways of Zion mourn ; none come to the solemn feasts ; all her gates mourn. Her mountain is desolate. Foxes walk on it : ” and the surrounding territory is one wide-spread scene of devastation.

To this state of things the text is a fine dramatic allusion. To the highly poetic mind of Jeremiah, warmed to enthusiasm by the impulse of the inspiring Spirit, Rachel,—the mother of Ephraim, the chief of the ten tribes formerly led captive to Assyria, and of Benjamin, one of the two tribes now led captive to Babylon,—whose tomb, near Ephrath, was in the midst of the scene of this sad catastrophe, appears as if roused from her sleep in the dust of more than a thousand years, by the weeping of the captives, as they were driven from a land dearer to them than any country can be to a Gentile patriot. He seems to see her indistinct form, and to hear her unearthly wailings : “ She weepeth sore in the night, and her tears are on her cheek.” All her children seem now Benonis, sons of her sorrow. She “ weeps not for the dead, neither does she bemoan *them*, but she weeps sore for those who have gone away, to return no more to their own country.” “ A voice,” exclaims the rapt seer, “ A voice was

heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping ; Rachel weeping for her children, refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not.” A more exquisite picture, a more touching description, is not to be found in the whole compass of poetry, sacred or profane.

This is the first scene which the words of the text bring before our mind ; and the second is like unto it—assuredly not less deeply affecting.

Six centuries have run their course since the events which we have just described. Jerusalem has long been rebuilt, and Judah inhabited. The city, according to the promise, after seventy years’ desolation, was restored, and her wall rebuilt in troublous times. “Jerusalem was inhabited in her own place, and old men and old women dwelt in her streets, and the city was full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof.” That wonderful city, which has witnessed, and which is yet to witness, so many strange events, after having passed through various vicissitudes, was now the peaceful capital of a tributary kingdom,—an Edomite, the vassal of all-engrossing, all-conquering Rome, sitting on the throne of David and Solomon.

Applied to
the Manners
of Bethlehem.

The whole of the inhabitants of the metropolis

of Judea, and most of all, their prince, were thrown into alarm by the arrival of certain mysterious strangers from the distant East, making inquiries after an infant king of the Jews, whose nativity had been announced to them in their own land by a Divine communication, accompanied with the appearance of a new star in the heavens. (Matt. ii. 1-18.) Herod the usurper trembled for the security of his throne, concluding that this infant king must be the Messiah, to whom the hopes of the Jews had been so long and so eagerly directed. Having summoned a meeting of the chief priests and scribes, and ascertained from them that Bethlehem, the city of David, was the predicted place of the nativity of his illustrious descendant, he sent the eastern sages to that town to make inquiry for the so signally heralded young prince, requiring them, should they succeed in their search, to return forthwith to him, that he, as the temporary occupant of David's throne, might hasten to do homage to its rightful owner. Led to a cottage in Bethlehem by the miraculous star, which to their great joy reappeared, they found in an infant, in the family of a carpenter in very humble circumstances, the illustrious prince they had come so far to see and to worship ; and after having pre-

sented him with their costly offerings, "being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Jerusalem, they departed into their own country another way."

The crafty unscrupulous Edomitish king of Judea, who had concealed his determination to murder the infant Messiah, under the pretext of a wish to do him honour, was exasperated when his deep-laid plot seemed thus to be frustrated. Stupified by ambition, he resolved to persist, at whatever expense, in his mad attempt to cancel what he seems to have known to be the decree of Heaven : "For," as Jeremy Taylor says, "if he did not believe the prophecies, why was he troubled ; and if he did believe them, how could he think that he could hinder that event which God himself had foretold would certainly come to pass ?" With the malignant jealousy and unshrinking villany which formed so prominent features in his character, as depicted in history,¹ Herod—though at the expense of revolting public feeling, and drawing on himself universal odium—determined, by the most obvious injustice and the most shocking cruelty, to secure the death of the new-born king ;

¹ *Macrob. Saturnal.* ii. 4. *Jos. Antiq.* xv. 3 ; xvi. 11 ; xvii. 6 ; *Bel. Jud.* i. 27.

and accordingly issued an order for the immediate slaughter of all the male infants in Bethlehem, who had been born subsequent to the time at which he had discovered from the Magi, that the natal star had appeared.¹

What a day in Bethlehem must that have been, when the executioners of this murderous edict appeared in its peaceful streets, and carried it into effect, unmoved by the weeping eyes and pity-begging looks of the mothers, or by the curses deep, if not loud, of the horrified spectators ! From

¹ The following lines of an old ecclesiastic hymn are worth quoting :—

“Cunae redundant sanguine,
Sed in Deum frustra furit :
Unum petit tot moribus
Mortes tot unus effugit.
Matres querelis parcite :
Quid rapta fietis pignora ?
Agnum salutis obsidem
Densa sequuntur nomine.”

They are thus rendered by Chandler in his *Hymns of the Primitive Church* (London, 1837) :—

“The cradles flow with infant blood,
But God his fury hath withstood ;
The Lord alone he sought to slay,
The Lord alone escaped away.
Ye mothers, let no tears be shed,
Yea, weep not though your babes be dead,
For now they stand before the throne,
And Jesus counts them as his own.”

“The old is better.”

the size of Bethlehem, which was "but little among the thousands of Judah," the number of infants who fell victims to this most atrocious decree, could not be very great, yet the monstrous injustice and barbarous cruelty of the transaction must have made a deep impression. How piercing the shrieks, how deep the anguish, of the bereaved mothers—how widely extended the murmurings of indignation and the moanings of sympathy!

While narrating this sad story, the beautiful oracle before us was recalled, by the Spirit who inspired it, to the mind of the Evangelist, and he found in the dismal events he had just recorded, a verification—if not, in the strict sense of the word, an accomplishment—of the Prophet's prediction. The words of the oracle are as applicable as if intended to describe them alone. Rachel's maternal instincts are again, as it were, roused, by the outrage done her, even in the grave where she had slept for so many ages.

"Even in her ashes live her wonted fires."—GRAY.

The shrieks of the slaughtered innocents, and the loud weeping of the bereaved mothers, have, as it were, broken the repose of the tomb, and again, after a lapse of six hundred years, her voice is

heard during the dreary night, uttering a wail deeper and more plaintive and more piercing than that which mourned the Babylonian captives. "A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping ; Rachel weeping for her children, refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not."

Applicable
to the Con-
solation of
Parents
deprived of
Infant
Children.

From the manner in which the evangelical historian accommodates to the Bethlehemitish massacre, the oracle originally, without doubt, referring to the Babylonian captivity, we are taught that though, in *expounding* Scripture, we cannot be too careful in keeping strictly to the proper meaning and the original reference of the inspired declaration, we are yet warranted, in the way of illustration, to apply the words of the Holy Ghost to events which they naturally describe, though different from—altogether unconnected with—those to which they primarily refer. The words before us were no prediction, but they are a very striking poetical account of the massacre of the innocents.

On this principle, clearly sanctioned by the usage of the New Testament writers in many instances, I conceive that I am not using an undue freedom with the Divine word, when, following in the track of some very excellent men, I take

occasion from these words to discourse for a little on a subject, in which I believe not a few in this audience, as well as myself, have at present a peculiar interest :—The view which these words naturally lead us to take of the death of children—the consolations provided for those who are visited with this affliction—and the effect which the consideration of these consolations ought to have on those to whom they are addressed. These are the three topics on which I intend, in the remaining part of the discourse, to fix your attention.

•

PART I.

THE DEATH OF INFANT CHILDREN THE CAUSE OF
DEEP SORROW.

Limited
sense of
the term
"Children."

As the word "children" is a term often used as expressive of relation, without reference to age, I think it proper to remark, in the commencement, that my observations will refer solely, either to infants properly so called, whose intellectual and moral capacities are so undeveloped, as that they may be described as "knowing neither good nor evil," or to those who, though they have outlived infancy in this sense of the term, are still "little children," and on whose minds, so far as their faculties admit, the revelation of the Divine character in the gospel of Christ, seems to have produced its appropriate effects in a measure and form suited to their age and circumstances.

The prophetic oracle under consideration proceeds on two facts respecting those children who come into this world but to leave it—to look about

them, and die ; over whom “ death reigns, though they have not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression.” It brings before our minds these two truths : that little children die ; and that their death is a source of severe affliction to those who are bereaved of them. Rachel’s children “ are not,” and there is a “ voice heard of weeping, lamentation, and mourning ; Rachel weeps for her children, and refuses to be comforted.” Let us look at these statements in their order.

Little children die. A very large proportion of the human race die in infancy or early childhood. Death is far more frequent among the very young, than among the very old. Indeed, so many die young, and in middle life, that there are comparatively few very old to die. With regard to the greater number of human beings, the beautiful figurative descriptions of the brevity of life are in no degree exaggerations. “ Man who is born of a woman is of few days : he cometh forth as a flower and is cut down ; he fleeth also as a shadow, and continues not. They are like grass that groweth up : in the morning it flourisheth and groweth up ; in the evening it is cut down and withered. As for man, his days are as grass, as a flower of

1. The Death
of Little
Children.

the field, so he flourisheth ; for the wind passeth over it and it is gone, and the place thereof shall know it no more. Man is like to vanity ; his days are as a shadow that passeth away. He withers in all the leaves of his spring. As the flower of the grass he passeth away ; for the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth. What is our life ? it is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and vanisheth away."

The Death
of Little
Children,
mysterious.

The death of little children, especially infants, who have never sinned, who indeed had not the capacity of sinning, not knowing good from evil, is, viewed by itself, a very mysterious dispensation. That death should be "the wages of sin," is a maxim which approves itself to the principles of our moral nature. It seems perfectly reasonable, unquestionably right. He who violates the holy, just, and good law of God, deserves to be punished ; and, revolting as death is to nature, it does not appear by any means too severe a penalty for so great an offence. But it does seem strange that those who never sinned, who never could sin, should nevertheless die. The consciously guilty parent, when he sees his infant children falling

under the stroke of disease and death, may well adopt the language of David—"Lo, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly ; but these lambs, what have they done ?"

The account which Scripture gives us of this seemingly unaccountable part of the Divine moral administration is, that *death* taken by itself—*mere* death—is not the punishment of personal transgression to mankind generally. It is the penalty of the violation of the original constitution under which man was placed,—the manifestation of the displeasure of God at the first sin of the first man ; and in this light, next to the atoning agonies of the Incarnate Son, and to the hopeless miseries of the irreclaimably wicked, it is the strongest demonstration of the evil of sin which the history of the universe affords. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men." All men die because one man sinned,—that one man the federal representative, as well as the natural parent, of the whole race. This is the apostle's argument (Rom. v. 12-14) : 'During the Mosaic law all died. But was not their death the execution of the penalty of that law ? No : *its* penalty was not death simply, but violent death. Besides,

The Death
of Little
Children
accounted
for.

that law could not act where it did not exist ; “ Where there is no law there can be no transgression ” of that law, and of course no execution of its penalty. But men died as universally before the Mosaic law as under it ; and it might have been supposed that death was the penalty of natural law, under which they were placed (for no rational being can be without law to God), had it not been, that they who could not violate that law died, as well as those who had violated it : “ Death reigned even over those who had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression.” Infants die who never did, never could, sin. The true cause of death in them is the true cause of death in all. “ By man,—by one man, comes death.” “ In Adam all die.”

“ They are not ”—
Meaning of
the phrase.

The words in our text, originally descriptive of removal by exile to a foreign country, which is a kind of civil death, and applied by the Evangelist Matthew to the death of the murdered innocents, are very applicable to the death of little children generally : “ They are not.” The phrase is not uncommon in Scripture, and equivalent expressions denoting death are to be found in all languages.¹ “ Thine eyes are upon me,” says Job, “ and I am

¹ Ecclus. xvii 25. Eurip. *Alc.* ; Philo de Jos.

not." Thou hast but to look on me; and I disappear. "Joseph is not," says Jacob. "O spare me," says David, "that I may recover strength before I go hence, and be no more."

When it is said of our children who are dead, that "they are not," we are by no means to infer from the phrase that they have ceased, or will soon cease, to have any existence. The evil heart of unbelief is apt enough to avail itself of appearances, to force in on us this disheartening abhorred conclusion, when we see the dear object of our fondest affections—so lately warm with life, blooming with health, active, vigorous, lovely—stretched out in a coffin, the beaming eye expressionless, the active limbs motionless; and notice indications that cannot be misunderstood, that yet a very little while, and that which has died and given up the ghost shall waste away, and in vain we shall inquire, Where is *it* ?

But there is no annihilation among the works of God. The body, now nothing but a piece of matter, must submit to the great laws of the material creation, but not a particle of it shall cease to exist. And as to the immaterial animating principle, that too continues to exist, and ever shall exist, according to the laws of the spiritual

Not annihilation.

world. To him who has seen a lovely child very near dissolution, with an eye sparkling with intelligence, and a heart full to an overflow of kind affection, it seems a most unnatural thing to identify ceasing to live with ceasing to breathe. To deny that the body exists, because the soul has been separated from it, seems not more absurd than to insist that the soul is no more, because the body is separated from it. Our dead children still *are*. Their bodies are in the grave, their spirits are in the region of disembodied souls. "They who are fallen asleep"¹—that is the Christian style of speech respecting the Christian dead—"They who are fallen asleep are" not "perished."

Change of
Mode of
Being, and
of Place.

But though our dead children still are, they "are not" *what* they were, they "are not" *where* they were. Though their existence be not extinguished, the mode of their existence is changed. They are not *what* they were. They were ani-

¹ The ancient Greeks finely applied to their burial-grounds a name signifying the sleeping-place, τὸ κοιμητήριον. It is to be regretted that there is no corresponding word in our mother-tongue. We have, to be sure, incorporated the term "cemetery," but it continues foreign, unsuggestive, and untouching. The French infidels—worse than heathens—about the time of their first revolution, busied themselves writing on the gates of their churchyards, "The place of eternal sleep." Happily, one part of so revolting an inscription contradicted and neutralized another. Sleep implies awaking.

mated bodies, embodied spirits ; now their bodies are lifeless, and their souls unconnected with matter, "like the angels of God." They are not *where* they were. Their bodies, which were never *they*, are not with us, in our house, at our table, but are in the lonely mansion of the grave : their spirits (which were and are *themselves*, and to which the body was but an appendage—something of which they were possessed)—their spirits are not, at any rate sensibly, with us, though they may be nearer us than we are aware of ; the relation of time and space to spirits, and the relation of the seen to the unseen world, being involved in a cloud of mystery. In momentary forgetfulness of the event which has happened, we are apt enough to seek them in their former haunts ; but they are not there ; we seek them, but we cannot find them. We can no longer hold intercourse with them. They are "separated from us by more than land and sea." They "have no more a portion for ever in anything done under the sun."

But though to us and to all mortals they "are not ;" to God, and angels, and the spirits of the just made perfect, they *are*. To us they are dead ; but they live to them, and what appears

to nature to be the extinction of being, is seen by faith to be but the entrance through the dark portals of death into the temple of eternal life. But these gates open only inward, and till we ourselves find admission, it is natural for us to think and speak of them who have entered, rather in reference to what they were than what they are ; and therefore we think, and feel, and speak of them as if they now were not, though in truth they *are* now in a higher sense than ever. *Our* life is but as death compared with *theirs*.

2. The Sorrow occasioned by the Death of Infant Children.

The second thought suggested to us by the words before us, in reference to the death of little children, is, that it is a source of severe affliction to those who are bereaved of them. There is a voice heard of weeping, lamentation, and mourning ; Rachel weeps for her children, and will not be comforted, because they are not.

Causes of this Sorrow, in the affectionate part of Human Nature.

It has been remarked that "it requires neither a profound knowledge of the principles of the constitution of man, nor an extensive acquaintance with the facts of his history, to convince us that he is not intended, as he is not fitted, for a state of independence and solitude. He could scarcely live at all, most certainly he could not live

comfortably or usefully, without a variety of connexions with his fellow-men. He has wants that cannot be supplied, wishes that cannot be gratified, distresses that cannot be relieved, by his own individual exertions. He is introduced into the world a social being, connected from the moment of his birth with the great family of mankind, through the medium of his parents, and possessed of the germs of those principles, under the influence of which, as developed by the incidents of his future life, the sphere of his social connexions may be indefinitely extended, and the strength of particular relative ties indefinitely increased."

"It is one among a thousand of the strong arguments, furnished by the constitution of our nature, for the infinite benignity of 'Him who made us,' that the social principle, carefully cultivated and wisely directed, is the source of a variety of pleasures, as pure in their nature, as high in their degree, as permanent in their continuance, as any that flow from an earthly origin. Indeed, the affections that produce and spring out of the natural and acquired mutual relations of mankind, the endlessly varied connexions of neighbourhood, and acquaintanceship, and friendship, and consanguinity, especially if regulated by prudence and

sanctified by piety, next to the religious affections—those principles which elevate and purify us by binding us close to God and eternity—are certainly, of all the elements of our constitution, the most richly productive of tranquil enjoyment and lasting happiness.”

“In proportion to the happiness which grows out of these relations, must be the pain experienced when they are dissolved. No affliction to which man is liable in the present state, is more calculated to produce deep and lasting suffering than being bereaved of relations and friends. Our friends and relatives are our dearest possessions. They are the proper objects of a much higher kind of affection than any other species of property, and their loss is, of all others, the most irreparable. Wealth, honour, pleasure, may all depart and return again and again, but when bereaved of friends we are bereaved indeed. If we cannot forget what can never be repaired, we must go to the grave mourning.”¹

The Parental Affection one of the strongest, and hence the intensity of this sorrow.

Of all the social and domestic affections, that of a parent to a child, is perhaps the strongest and most tender. It is a wise and benevolent arrangement which makes it so. It has been justly said,

¹ *Mourner's Friend.*

“Without such a powerful attachment, the privations, toils, and cares which the nurture of the infant requires, would never be submitted to ; but love renders all these easy and pleasant.” When God would give us an emblem of His love to His own, He borrows it from the yearnings of a father’s heart : He says, “He pitieth them as a father pitieth his children ;” and it is spoken of as something absolutely monstrous that a woman should forget her sucking child, and cease to have compassion for the son of her womb. “God binds parents to their children with a cord of love ; and it is a presumption that the heart is hard if it bleeds not when the cord is broken.”¹

The best men have deeply felt this species of sorrow. When Jacob heard of the death of Joseph, Jacob. “I shall,” said he, “go down to the grave to my son mourning ;” and when he feared the loss of Benjamin, “If I am bereaved of my children, I AM bereaved.” “Ephraim mourned for his children many days.” Ephraim. Who can forget, that ever heard it, David’s anguished lament over his worthless son ?—“O Absalom, my son Absalom, would God I had died for thee ; O Absalom, my son, my son !” David. It was bitter sorrow that drew from

¹ Charters.

Widow of
Zarephath.

the hospitable widow of Zarephath, with her dead son in her bosom, the expostulation, "What have I to do with thee, O man of God? Art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance and to slay my son?" And who but a parent can understand how deeply the soul of the bereaved

Shunamite.

Shunamite was vexed within her, notwithstanding her saying, "It is well with the child," when she caught Elisha by the feet, and said, "Did I desire a son of my lord? did I not say, Do not deceive me?"

The Death
of very
Young
Children
may occa-
sion very
deep Sor-
row.

The death even of very young children may occasion very deep sorrow. There is in infancy and childhood something peculiarly attractive. Some infants and children have a singular loveliness about them, which calls forth kindness from every human being who has a heart, with whom they even casually have intercourse; and to parents every infant and child is dear and lovely. Many a strong-minded man, as well as David the king of Israel, has with supplications and tears begged from "Him to whom belong the issues from death," the life of his infant. What a picture of paternal anxiety and tenderness! "David besought God for the child, and David fasted, and went in and lay all night upon the earth; and the elders of his

house arose and went to him to raise him up from the earth ; but he would not, neither did he eat bread with them."

The cup of bitter sorrow of which bereaved parents drink, is composed of various ingredients. There is the privation of pure and exquisite enjoyment. The amount of pleasurable feeling communicated to all rightly-constituted minds and hearts, and especially to the parental mind and heart, by familiar intercourse with little children, is very great. It is a very deep and dark cloud of sorrow on which their smile cannot shed a beam of gladness ; and amid the cares and anxieties of life, their spontaneous endearments are a balm of most soothing influence to the hurt mind and heavy heart ; while to witness the dawn of reason, and the development of affection—to plant the seeds of truth, and to watch and train the tender thoughts as they bud and blossom, affords one of the highest intellectual and moral pleasures of which we are capable. All this is gone, gone for ever, and we feel for the moment more miserable than if we had never tasted delights so like those of paradise, so exquisite and so pure.

Elements
of Grief for
the Death
of Little
Children.

(1.) Privation
of pure
Enjoyment.

Then there is the extinction of fondly-cherished hopes. "If they had lived, what might they have

(2.) Extinction
of Hope.

come-to? How pleasant and diverting might their childhood have been? How hopeful their youth? How useful their riper age?"¹ The little beautiful shoots which have been torn up, might have grown and flourished, and become stately fruit-bearing trees. We hoped, and we thought we had grounds for our hope, that when we were gone, these children would, to society and the Church, more than supply our place. We hoped that they would cheer our path as it declined towards the grave. "In their affectionate attentions," to use the words of another, "we expected a solace to our sorrows, a refuge from our fears. We hoped to die in their arms, live in their remembrance, and be honoured in their virtues."² But in the death of our children these hopes are blasted; and if hope deferred maketh the heart sick, hope disappointed, utterly frustrated, makes the heart die within one.

"Our hopes and our prospects are shaded,
For the plants that inspired them have shed
Their foliage, all green and unfaded,
Ere the beauty of spring-time had fled."³

The onward prospect of life is dark and dreary, bleak and comfortless:—the helplessness of age, without *their* arm to lean on—the solitude of

¹ Howe.² Belfrage.³ Barton.

the sick-chamber uncheered by *their* presence, unbrightened by *their* smile—the parting pang unsoothed by *their* sympathy—the hands of comparative strangers closing our eyes and laying us in the dust. Yes ; it is painful to mourn for those who, we had expected, should have mourned for us—to lay those in the grave by whom we expected to be laid in the grave.¹

“What fond calculations,” says Dr. Doddridge, ^{Dr. Doddridge.} smarting under the loss of a dear child—“what fond calculations do we form of what they will be from what they are ! How do we in thought open every blossom of sprightliness or humanity, or piety, to its full-spread, and ripen it to a sudden maturity ! But oh, who shall teach those who

¹ Cicero, in his beautiful tract “*De Senectute*,” represents Cato as lamenting that he had been obliged to perform for his son the funeral rites he might have expected to receive from him,—“*Catonem meum—cujus a me corpus crematum est ; quod contra decuit ab illo meum.*” “It is remarked by an ancient historian,* that in peace children bury their parents, in war parents bury their children : nor is the difference small. Children lament their parents sincerely, indeed, but with that moderate tranquil sorrow which it is natural for those to feel who are conscious of retaining many tender ties, many animating prospects. Parents mourn for their children with the bitterness of despair ; the widowed mother loses, when she is deprived of her children, everything but the capacity of suffering ; her heart, withered and desolate, cherishes no other hope. It is Rachel weeping for children, and refusing to be comforted, because they are not.”—ROBERT HALL.

* Herodotus, *Clio*, c. 87.

never felt it, how it tears the very soul when God roots up the tender plant with inexorable hand, and withers the bud in which the colours were beginning to glow ! Where is our hope ? In the coffin—in the grave.”

(3.) Accompanying circumstances.

The sorrow arising from the loss of what cannot be repaired or replaced, and from the extinguishment of fondly-cherished hope, is often greatly increased by the painful circumstances in which our little children are taken from us. The mothers of Bethlehem felt the truth of this remark in all its force ; but even where there is no external violence, the exanimating sickness, the laborious breathing, the anxious, anguished look of helpless, hopeless suffering, the convulsed form, the plaintive wail—these, and similar accompaniments of the deathbed, take fast hold of the memory, and we weep for what they have suffered, as well as for what we ourselves suffer.

(4.) Remorse.

And few are the cases indeed in which there is not another and a very bitter ingredient in the cup of bereavement—the consciousness that we have not been all to, we have not done all for them, that we might and ought to have been and done ; and the conviction that, especially in reference to their highest interests, we can do no more

for them for ever. Even those who have not been altogether careless in using appropriate means for promoting the happiness of their children, will find that an infusion of remorse, however small, greatly sharpens the bitterness of the draught of sorrow.

Thus much for the illustration of the two thoughts, in reference to the death of children, which the text naturally suggests : Little children die ; and the death of little children occasions sorrow, deep sorrow, to those who are deprived of them.

I conclude this part of the subject with a few words of exhortation to children and to parents.

Little children, listen to me for a few moments. I will speak as plainly as I can, and you must hear as attentively as you can. What I have to say deserves your attention.

Exhortation
to Little
Children.

Little children, you must die. You may live to be old ; but it is far more likely that you will die while you are young. If you were infants, mere babies, it would be to no purpose to speak to you. You could not understand me ; and it would not be necessary for me to say to you what I am going to say, for I have a strong conviction that such little babies—though they do not, cannot know Him who says, “Suffer the little children

to come unto me"—shall, when they die, all go to the Saviour, and be made happy with Him for ever, finding in Him all that they lost in Adam, and much more.

But you to whom I speak have yourselves broken God's law—you have sinned, and deserve to be punished. If you die without knowing Jesus and trusting in Him as your Saviour, and loving Him and seeking to serve Him by doing what He commands, you must be miserable—miserable for ever. Seek, then, to know Jesus. Listen to what your parents, what your teachers, what your ministers, say to you about Him. Be diligent in learning to read, that you may be able to read the Bible, which tells you of Him, and of the way of being saved by Him. That is the only way to be happy, if you live to be old. That is the only way to be happy, if you die when young.

You must die—you may die soon, very soon. You may be well just now, but ere to-morrow morning you may be dead. And when you die, what will become of you? You know your body must be laid in the grave; but where will your soul, your never-dying soul, where will it be? It must be either in heaven or in hell. Ah, it must

be in hell, if you do not know Jesus, love Jesus, trust in Jesus, serve Jesus.

My dear young friends, Jesus loves you—laid down His life to save you. Oh, will you not love Him, and show that you love Him by doing what He commands you? If you grow up not knowing Him, nor loving Him, you will not, you cannot, be happy. If you know Him and love Him, you will, you must be, happy—far happier than if you had all the riches and pleasures and honours which this world can give you.

Your parents love you, and because they love you, they wish you to love and trust and serve Jesus. Should you die young, they will be very sorry, they will mourn and weep for you; but if they have reason to think that you knew and loved Jesus, tears of joy will mingle with their tears of sorrow, and they will rejoice in the hope of meeting you when they die, in our heavenly Father's house above, and of standing side by side with you at the right hand of the Judge at the great day, and of spending eternity with you in heaven.

Oh, as you would wish to be prepared for living or for dying, for being your parents' comfort in life, or for giving them comfort when you come to

ing ; the untimely loss of a dear child is hard enough to bear, without the accompanying pangs of remorse and fear.

Parents ! you would count yourselves worse than " the sea monsters," if, knowing what would certainly, or even probably, secure for your children a long, and healthy, and happy life, you did not endeavour to obtain it for them. If you are Christians, you know what is necessary, what is sufficient, to secure their happiness for ever ; and in possession of this knowledge, can you allow them to remain ignorant of it ? can you be careless in teaching them, as they are able to bear it, the way of life ? can you restrain prayer to God for that Spirit of life and love and holiness and peace, which He has promised to all who ask Him, and whose influence alone can make your children wise and good and happy for ever ?

Parents ! be in earnest about the salvation of your own souls. Till you are so, you never will—you never can—be in earnest about the salvation of the souls of your children ; and remember that, if through your ignorance, unbelief, and worldliness, indolence and carelessness, you not only lose your own souls, but the souls of your offspring,

their blood will be required at your hands ; and at the judgment-seat and through eternity you will be branded as the murderers of your own children.

In following the course recommended, you have much to encourage you. No instrumentality seems to be so frequently blessed for the salvation of the soul, as the domestic instruction of little children. Oh, the happiness of the man who, when he is called to part with a dear child, does so in the well-grounded hope of meeting it in heaven ! Blessed, unspeakably blessed, will all be who shall stand in the day of judgment before the Son of man, each in his own lot, at the end of the days ; but peculiarly blessed, even among those blessed ones, will he be who shall stand attended there by those whom he was intrusted to nurse for God and for eternity, and shall be able to say, “ Here am I, and the children, all the children, thou didst give me : we served thee together on earth for a season, we hope to serve thee together in heaven through eternity—an unbroken family.” What a pleasing retrospect—what a joyful prospect ! In the transport of that hour, in the eternity of happiness with his children, to which the sentence of that hour consigns them, his work is rewarded—he has received his wages.

If we parents would have this happiness "in that day," let us see to it that we ourselves be in Christ, that then we may "be found in him;" and let us now "travail, as it were, in birth" till Christ be formed in our children the hope of glory. Let us and our houses serve the Lord; and around the family altar let this often be the expression of our common desire :

" Oh, if it be thy holy will,
We pray that, hand in hand,
We all may travel many a hill
Of this the pilgrim's land ;
With Zion's shining gate in view,
Through every danger rise,
And form a family anew,
Unbroken in the skies."—MONTGOMERY.

PART II.

CONSOLATIONS FOR THOSE BEREAVED OF LITTLE CHILDREN.

I PROCEED now to turn your attention to the consolations provided for those that are mourning the loss of little children.

One of the names by which God makes Himself known to us is, "The God who comforteth such as are cast down." The great purposes of His holy, righteous, and benignant moral government, in a state of things disordered by sin, render necessary the infliction of suffering, even on those who are the objects of His peculiar love—those whom He hath "set apart for himself." He, indeed, "causes grief," for all our afflictions come forth from Him, "wonderful in counsel, excellent in working;" but "though he cause grief, he has compassion according to the multitude of his mercies;" and therefore "happy is the man whom

Appropriate
consolation,
furnished for
all kinds of
affliction.

God correcteth," for if He "make sore," He also "bindeth up"—if He "wound," His hands "make whole." For all the afflictions, however severe and complicated and long-continued, with which He chastens His children, He furnishes in His word consolations and supports so appropriate and powerful, that if dutifully improved under the promised influence of Him whose name is the Comforter, they will enable the sufferers not only to be patient, but even "joyful in all their tribulations." There is much in the passage before us calculated to heal the bereaved parent, broken in heart, and to bind up his wounds ; and, in endeavouring to unfold the import of the heavenly consolations suggested by it, I feel as if I were complying with the command, "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith our God."

It is not my intention, in the following remarks, strictly to confine myself to the illustration of such consolations as are suggested by the words of the text. I mean to take this opportunity of directing your attention to the principal sources of comfort opened in the Word of God to those who are suffering under the widely-extended, and frequently recurring, affliction of the loss of children.

I shall, however, bring before your mind, in the first place, the consolatory considerations which naturally rise out of the words before us. These are the four following : The work of the bereaved parents shall be rewarded ;—there is hope respecting the result of the dispensation so painful to them ;—their children shall return from the land of the enemy ;—and they shall return to their own border.

1. Consola-
tions sug-
gested by
the Text.

1. *The work of the bereaved parent shall be rewarded.*

The first consolatory reflection suggested by these words to the religious, bereaved parent (for though we pity all bereaved parents, it is only to the religious, bereaved parent that we can administer effectual consolation), the first consolatory reflection to such a person is, that his work shall be rewarded.

1. The
work of the
bereaved
parent will
be rewarded

The work of the bereaved religious parent may be considered as twofold—the work in which he was engaged in reference to the child of whom he has been bereaved, and the work in which the bereavement has led him to engage. With regard to both, it may be said, his work shall be rewarded ; and the declaration, whether viewed in reference to the one or the other, is fitted to administer consolation.

(1.) His
work be-
stowed on
the lost
Child.

Every right-minded, right-hearted parent, must consider the education of his children, in all the extent of meaning belonging to that expression, as one of his most important duties. To have them formed to a character which will make them useful and happy in this world, and which will prepare them for the higher exercises and enjoyments of the eternal world, is an object which must appear to him transcendently important, and must excite deep anxiety, and lead to persevering exertion. To secure for them a healthy constitution, mental and bodily—to guard them both in body and mind against the malignant influences which in this evil world are so rife—to have them furnished with the information, and formed to the habits, which are necessary to make them respectable and useful members of civil society—to have their minds filled with the knowledge of the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent—to have their whole nature brought under its transforming and governing influence, that on the earth they may “serve their generation by the will of God,” and be active agents in promoting the great cause of God’s glory and man’s salvation ; that, in doing so, they may “see the good of his chosen, rejoice in the gladness of his nation, and glory with

his inheritance ;” and that, on leaving this earth, they may be found “meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light,” and “have an abundant entrance ministered to them into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ ;”—these are the habitual desires of the religious parent, and they naturally lead to earnest prayer, and to varied, patient, persevering effort.

This is “the work” of the parent—a work which, when in any good measure rightly performed, is never unrewarded. In few cases, if any, is a really well-conducted Christian education unproductive of happy results. In very many cases it is productive of the happiest. A large proportion of the useful, honourable members of civil society—a large proportion of the active ornamental members of the Church of Christ on earth—a large proportion of “the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven,” become so, in consequence of the blessing of God resting on the prayers and labours of religious parents. In these results, the parents find their work richly rewarded.

Even in the comparatively rare cases—for they are rare—in which a truly good education fails altogether of its object, the parent’s work of faith

and labour of love is not forgotten nor unrequited. Though he should "labour in vain, and spend his strength for nought and in vain, his judgment is with the Lord, his work with his God ;" "though his house be not so with God" as he could wish, or as he had fondly anticipated, "God has made with himself a covenant ordered in all things and sure," in which he will find "all his salvation and all his desire."

The true reason, however, why, in so many cases, the children of professedly, and it may be in some cases of even really, religious persons, do not prove what their parents could wish them to be, is, not that their work has not been rewarded, but that the work was not there to reward ; that education has been so neglected and mismanaged, that reward was out of the question. Result there has been, but it has been punishment, not reward. Yes, many parents, even religious parents, may read their sin in their punishment—in the worthless character and bad behaviour of their children ; and instead of complaining that their work is not rewarded, they should acknowledge their sin, and do what it may be yet possible to do, to prevent the full development of its natural results.

When children in infancy and in early child-

hood are taken away, it is very natural for the parent to feel not only that his hopes are frustrated, but that his labour is lost. The child had discovered talents and dispositions which promised, in the parent's estimation, to be ornamental and useful, both in civil and religious society ; and that he should be so, has been the subject of many fervent prayers, the object of much anxious study and exertion. He had hoped that that child would live to do more than requite his care ; and that in his honourable exertions, and their prosperous issue, he would have obtained an exceeding great reward. God has ordered it otherwise, and these hopes lie buried in the child's untimely grave.

But the religious parent's work shall not go unrewarded. His labours for his infant child, which he would have accounted well repaid by a long and prosperous life on earth, are surely more richly recompensed by that child having obtained, by an early dissolution, "length of days for ever and ever" in the land of Immanuel. He asked for life, and he would have been joyfully grateful had the prayer been answered. Surely he should not complain when, instead of life, God has given immortality.'

When little children have discovered, in a way

suited to their age, that the labours of the parents have been blessed as the means of causing to germinate the seed of a truly holy character, how can these labours be more highly rewarded, than by the transplanting of the promising plant, from the ungenial soil and atmosphere of this world, into a region where the blossom is in no hazard of being blighted, and where the fruit shall assuredly be eternal life ? Or what reward can be more appropriate ? The good work begun by their instrumentality is not even interrupted ; it proceeds under far more favourable circumstances than it could have done here below, and in its completion they will receive a full reward.

(2.) His work of improvement of the affliction.

But the expression “work” naturally enough calls up to the mind not only the work with which the parent was engaged, in reference to the child of whom he has been bereaved, but the work in which the bereavement has led him to engage. All afflictions are intended to quicken us and set us a-working. The work in which the death of a child calls us to engage, is not in itself a pleasing one. It calls sin to remembrance. It is intended to lead to serious self-inquiry ; to examination especially as to what was wanting and wrong in our conduct in the relation which has been dis-

solved ; to penitent acknowledgment ; to earnest prayer for pardon and sanctification ; to an humbling of ourselves under the mighty hand of God ; to a repressing of every disposition to murmur against His appointments, as unwise or unrighteous or unkind ; to a resisting of the tendency to faint under the rebuke of God ; and to a searching out and correcting of those faults which made the chastisement necessary.

This is a work in which every religious bereaved parent will feel himself called on to engage ; he will find it arduous ; and if it do not immediately produce any good effect, his hands are apt to hang down, and he is in hazard of becoming weary in this species of well-doing. But “let him be strong—let not his hands be weak, for his work shall be rewarded.” This sowing in tears will end in a harvest of joy. The struggle, unnoticed by the world, is regarded with approbation by God, and if persevered in, will be rewarded by a large measure of “the peace of God ;” and “the chastisement which, for the present, is not joyous but grievous, will yield to him who is thus exercised, the peaceable fruits of righteousness.”

2. *There is hope concerning the departed.*

The second consolatory reflection suggested to a

2. There
is hope
concerning the
departed
Children.

religious, bereaved parent, is that there is hope respecting his departed children.

There is no reason to think that they have ceased to exist, or that their bodies shall continue for ever in the grave. It is a general truth respecting the whole race, that when the dust returns to the dust as it was, "the spirit returns to him who gave it."—"All live to him."—"As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive."—"By man came death" to all men ; by "man too," to all men, "comes the resurrection of the dead."

But the assurance that the souls of his children continue to live, and that their bodies shall in due time be restored to them, goes but a little way to comfort a mourning parent. He remembers that there are two regions in the invisible state—that to which the rich man's soul was conveyed, as well as that to which Lazarus was carried by angels ; and that there is a resurrection to damnation as well as to life. It is not so much in reference to continued being, as to everlasting wellbeing, that the anxieties of bereaved parents are apt to be awakened.

On this subject I wish to speak with the modesty which becomes us on all subjects on which the statements of Scripture are not very full and

explicit ; but I have no hesitation in stating it as my fixed judgment, with regard to the final state of infants, properly so called, that there is nothing to fear ; and with regard to little children, in whom the religious and moral faculties are very imperfectly developed, to whose minds the saving truth has been presented, that there is great reason to hope, and in many cases abundant ground for even "the full assurance of hope."

Grounds for
believing the
salvation of
infants.

The grounds on which I hold that there is no reason to fear as to the final happiness of those who die in their infancy may be easily stated ; and I think it the more needful to state them, as the true doctrine of the salvation of infants seems to me to have been often pleaded for by very unsatisfactory arguments—arguments which imply the falsehood of an undoubtedly true doctrine, original sin, and overlook the necessity of the atoning blood, and the transforming Spirit, of Jesus Christ. I am not at all disposed to maintain the abstract injustice of God's consigning all the fallen race of man, including those who die in infancy, to hopeless misery, for, without the intervention of the provided restorative economy personally applied to the inheritor of the sad legacy which Adam has left to all his descendants, the disease

must run its course, and end in complete, hopeless depravity and misery—the second death—from which there is no redemption ; and the circumstance of depraved tendencies developing themselves before or after death, does not seem materially to affect the question. There is nothing either in Scripture or in reason to lead to the conclusion that *death*, mere *death*, has any power to extinguish or even check that seed of evil, which, wherever it germinates, must, if not destroyed by Divine influence, bring forth fruit unto eternal death. My argument rests on another foundation altogether. I hold that the whole tenor of Scripture leads to the conclusion, that all infants who die in infancy are included in the election of grace, and are saved through the atonement and Spirit of Jesus Christ.

(1.) The
Divine
character.

Let us look at the *Divine character* as described in Scripture. “God delights in mercy.” He is uniformly merciful wherever the exercise of mercy does not interfere with the glories of His character, and the stability of His administration as the Governor of the universe. He willeth not the death of the most atrocious sinner. He pardons our innumerable actual transgressions, however aggravated, when we gladly and gratefully in the faith of the truth receive the reconciliation, and by

believing in Jesus become personally interested in that wondrous Divine economy by which the just God is the justifier of the ungodly, and the Saviour of the sinner. When we know that there is a foundation laid for the exercise of mercy, in consistency with justice, in the infinitely valuable atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ, is it not the natural conclusion that this mercy will be extended to all who have not sinned in their own persons? and in the absence of everything like an opposite statement, should we not rest in this conclusion, as on this ground more probable than its opposite?

Consider those passages of Scripture in which the Supreme Being expresses a *peculiar regard for infants*. When He entered into covenant with Israel He takes special notice of the "little ones" (Deut. xxix. 10); and when He expostulates with them on their idolatrous enormities, he particularly mentions their immolation of children as peculiarly provoking to Him: "Thou hast sacrificed thy sons and daughters to idols, and hast slain MY children."¹ The last passage is very remarkable. It has been justly said that "compassion for injured infants goads on the flashes of celestial wrath, and

(2.) God's
peculiar
regard for
infants.

¹ Ezek. xvi. 20, 21; Jer. xix. 2-8.

mercy towards them redoubles the thunder of holy indignation." The number of children in Nineveh is mentioned by Him as a reason why He was unwilling to visit that guilty city with the threatened destruction. When the grown-up Israelites were doomed to perish in the wilderness, it was promised that "the little ones should go in and possess Canaan."¹ If justice does not absolutely require Him to make miserable those little ones, of whom He speaks so endearingly,—and who dare assert that?—is it not the probability that He will make them happy for ever?

(3.) The
character
of Christ.

Then let us look at *Him who declared the Father*, who is His express image, so that they who have seen Him have seen the Father. The circumstance that the Only-begotten, instead of assuming human nature as it was in Adam when he fell, in a state of maturity, became the infant Jesus, looks benignantly towards infant salvation. "Why," says Jeremy Taylor, "should He be an infant, but that infants should receive the crown of their age, the purification of their stained nature, the sanctification of their persons, and the saving of their souls by their infant Lord and elder brother."

¹ Deut. i. 35-39; Numb. xiv. 30.

But passing this, let us consider that most delightful incident recorded by three of the Evangelists. "They brought young children to Jesus that he should touch them, and his disciples rebuked those who brought them. But when Jesus saw it he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God ; and he took them up in his arms, put his hands on them, and blessed them." I will not dogmatise as to the precise meaning of a passage, which admits of more than one interpretation, but I will say, in the cautious language of John Newton, "I think it at least highly probable that in these words our Lord does not only, if at all, intimate the necessity of our becoming as little children in simplicity, as a qualification without which (as he expressly declares in other places) we cannot enter into His kingdom, but informs us of a fact, that the number of infants who are effectually redeemed to God by His blood, so greatly exceeds the aggregate of adult believers, that, comparatively, his kingdom may be said to consist of little children."

Consider, farther, *the accounts which are in Scripture given us of the final judgment.* These

(4.) Scriptural representation of the general judgment.

are numerous and varied, but in every one of them the principle is brought out, that the condemned sinner suffers for his own conscious violation of Divine law—"eats of the fruit of his own doing." It is the "enemy of God by wicked works," it is the rejecter of the Saviour and His offered salvation, that is adjudged to punishment. "Every one" there "bears his own burden." The argument suggested by this fact respecting the judgment-day, is strengthened by the representations of the nature of the punishments to which the condemned are then doomed. These are all connected with the remorseful remembrance of the past—the recollection of duties omitted, sins committed—neglected opportunities, despised mercies. This constitutes an essential part of that hopeless misery which is represented as the undying worm and the unquenchable fire.

(5.) Harmony with the general principles of evangelical truth.

In fine, the doctrine that all infants are, through the special love of God exerting itself in consistency with His righteousness through the mediation of Christ, secured of salvation, *perfectly harmonizes with the great principles of evangelical truth.* It has been well said, "Those who look for heaven as the reward of human merit, and those who acknowledge no election that is not

founded on good works foreseen, cannot, without opposition to their respective systems, defend infant salvation, since these departed babes possessed no merit, and since in them no good works could be foreseen.”¹ But the advocate of the doctrines of grace, who believes that salvation is the gift of undeserved mercy, and that election is founded only on “the good pleasure of his goodness,” can with perfect consistency maintain the proposition, That God has determined to confer eternal life through Christ on all whom He has ordained to remove from the earth before they arrived at the season in which they could discern good from evil. For these reasons, with Mr. Newton, “I am willing to believe, till the Scripture forbids me, that infants of all nations and kindreds, without exception, who die before they are capable of sinning ‘after the similitude of Adam’s transgression,’ who have done nothing in the body of which they can give account, are included in the election of grace; and that the words of our Lord with respect to another class of persons, are applicable to them: ‘It is not the will of our Father in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.’”

There can be no doubt that, to the *Christian*

¹ Kollock.

parent who has laid hold on the covenant for himself, there is great additional consolation and good hope from the fact that his God has declared that He will be the God of his seed. The ordinance which meets these children at their entrance into the world, contains in it an emblematical representation of the blessings of the new covenant, "ordered in all things and sure," and surely intimates that these blessings shall be enjoyed by them, if not wilfully rejected.

Such are the grounds on which we hold, that with regard to the final state of infants, there is nothing to fear. "They are born for a better world than this; they just enter this state of tribulation; they quickly pass through it; their robes are washed white in the blood of the Lamb, and they are admitted for His sake before His throne."¹

- It is not possible for us to fix the point at which moral responsibility commences. The age at which the human being becomes accountable varies in different individuals, according to the earlier or later development of the intellectual and moral faculties. The Great Judge knows perfectly all the elements of each case, and He will assuredly

¹ Charters.

act in a manner worthy of His character, as at once the God of righteousness and the God of love.

With regard to those little children who have their intellectual and moral nature so far unfolded as to be able to make a distinction between right and wrong, and who have shown that that nature exists in them in a fallen state, by their doing what they know to be wrong, and neglecting to do what they know to be right, we cannot speak universally in the same terms of certainty respecting their final salvation, as of that of infants properly so called. But even with regard to very many of these, religious parents have reason to hope ; with regard to not a few, they may safely indulge "the full assurance of hope." If, when the saving truth respecting the only true God and Jesus Christ has been brought before their minds, so far as they are capable of apprehending it, they have obviously loved and listened to instruction, if they have manifested a sense of dependence on God, a fear to offend Him, a desire to please Him, regret for having offended Him, a disposition to confess faults when committed, especially to confess them to *Him* and ask *His* pardon, a love to truth, and such interest in religious exercises as is compatible with their ne-

cessarily very limited capacities ; if they have discovered a candid teachable mind, and a benevolent and grateful and submissive disposition, though in everything connected with religion, as with other things, "they spake as children, they understood as children, they thought as children," and though evidence was not wanting that "sin dwelt in them," yet in such cases there is no ground for reasonable doubt that there was in them "some good thing towards the Lord God of Irrael," and there is foundation for reasonable hope, that by the power of the atonement and intercession of "the High Priest of our profession," the deathful plague within had been stayed, and that the good Spirit who had begun the good work, will perfect it in the day of the Lord.

There are instances, though they are of rare occurrence, in which very young children, from a precocious development of mind, accompanied by abundant communication of Divine influence, have shown an extent and accuracy of spiritual understanding, and a degree of attainment in holy disposition, well fitted to astonish and make ashamed Christians of mature years. Wherever such effects are produced, the parents have special cause of thanksgiving ; but in ordinary cases we are not to

look for the religion of men in children ; and where the symptoms enumerated above, and similar ones, are exhibited, the bereaved parents may well bless God and take courage, and “restrain their voice from weeping and their eyes from tears.”

3. *The departed shall return from the land of the enemy.*

3. The departed shall return from the land of the enemy.

The third consolatory reflection suggested by the text to bereaved religious parents is, that “their children shall return from the land of the enemy.”

Death may well be considered as an enemy of the human race. As to the unpardoned man, it puts an end to all enjoyment, and introduces him into a state of unmixed and endless suffering ; it rivets the fetters of guilt, drags the body into the grave, in which as a prison it remains till “it come forth to the resurrection of damnation,” and consigns the spirit to those “regions of sorrow” where the angels who kept not their first abode are “reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day,” and “where hope never comes” to any who enter their “doleful shades.” To the forgiven man, though it can do him no fatal injury, death is yet an enemy, disquieting his mind, deranging his plans, often

wringing his heart with anguish, and at last demolishing the earthly house of his pilgrimage.

Bereaved parents deeply feel that death is their enemy, and in their imagination it is naturally personified as the barbarian invader, rudely seizing their children and hurrying them away to a distant foreign land, to be subjected to a degrading slavery ; or rather, as the ruffian wolf breaking into the domestic fold and carrying off the lambs to his dismal den to be devoured by him.

The land of the enemy, to which our children are carried by death, is the grave, "that land of darkness as darkness itself, and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness." To think that our beloved children are in this land of darkness, under the dominion of this enemy, is a most painfully affecting consideration. But there are three reflections on this subject fitted to relieve and comfort the heart.

It is but a part, and the least important part, of our children that is in the land of death ; even while there, death will not be able to do even that part which is under his power real or permanent injury ; and in due time that part of them which he holds captive shall be brought back from his land.

As spiritual beings capable of thought, and

affection, and action, our children are untouched by death. Though their bodies are asleep in the grave, their souls live together with Christ. They are with Him where He is, and behold His glory. Absent from the body, they are present with the Lord ; and while the material part of their nature is in the land of death, and darkness, and confinement, and silence, their freed spirits are in the regions of life, and light, and liberty, and celestial melody. " They hunger no more, neither do they thirst any more, neither does the sun light on them, nor any heat. The Lamb, who is in the midst of the throne, feeds them, and leads them to living fountains of waters, and God wipes away all tears from their eyes."

' But their bodies are the captives of the enemy ; and having got them into his hand, he is asserting his power by destroying their form, as well as spoiling their beauty. How soon does he so alter the victim of his power that we are glad to hide, in the darkness of the grave, the form on which we once thought we could never gaze but with delight ! and how soon does the most elegant body, under his corrupting, decaying, withering influence, lose its symmetry, as well as the most beautiful countenance its loveliness !' It is even

so : and the thought is most revolting to our natural feelings ; but, in truth, the enemy death is but effecting those changes in the mortal body which must precede that body's becoming immortal. That body is putting on corruption, in order that it may put on incorruption—putting on mortality, that it may put on immortality. The caterpillar must sleep in the tomb it has prepared for itself, before it become a beautiful winged insect. The seed is not injured when it seems to be rotting in the dust ; it is but undergoing a change, which is necessary to its germinating, and becoming a beautiful flower or a fruitful tree. These are soothing considerations to the bereaved heart.

But the consolatory thought most obviously suggested by the words before us, is, that even that part of our children which is under the power of death, shall come back from the land of the enemy. They who deny or doubt the possibility or the reality of the resurrection, “err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God.” Jesus is “the resurrection and the life ;” He has raised the dead ; He has Himself risen from the dead ; and He has become the Prince of Life, and bears the keys of death and the unseen world. He has paid the ransom of His people, who are the cap-

tives of the grave ; and it is His purpose to follow out the redemption, by leading the captivity captive. To his people he proclaims, "*Thy dead*"—they are still ours—" *My dead*," says Abraham, Gen. xxiii. 13—" shall live. *My dead body*," (says the Messiah, by his Spirit—Isa. xxvi. 19)—they are still more *His*—" they shall arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust ; your dew shall be as the dew of herbs."

How long our children may remain in the land of the enemy, we cannot tell ; but " the hour is coming, when all who are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they who hear shall live and come forth." When the Lord descends from heaven to be " glorified in his saints and admired in them that believe," " the dead in Christ shall arise." " In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, the dead shall be raised incorruptible." It is the will of Him who sent the Ransomer, that of all whom He has given Him He should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. Those who, one by one, were carried in silence and sorrow to the land of the enemy, rising up a great army, shall return in one glorious host, amid the solemn peals of the archangel's trumpet, and the joyful gratulations of the angelic millions.

Not more certainly are they now in the land of the enemy, than they shall, at the appointed period, come forth from it. "Christ is risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept; for since by man came death, by man comes also the resurrection of the dead; for as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the first-fruits, afterward they that are Christ's at his coming."

With what delight will parents, themselves released from the captivity of the grave, behold their early-lost, long-mourned children, "coming forth," not the pale, emaciated, lifeless, ghastly forms they reluctantly committed to the grave, but strong in incorruptibility, glorious in beauty, "fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body!" Then shall it appear to the assembled universe, that among the redeemed of the Lord, fathers have not hoped in vain, nor mothers brought forth for trouble. "They are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them."

'But it will be long, long ere they return. The captivity of death is measured, not by years, but by ages.' What then? It is but the few, it may be the very few, remaining days of the years of

our pilgrimage, which prevent our spirits from embracing theirs ; and in the resting-places prepared for us, though we shall not cease to desire, we shall never weary for "the adoption, the redemption of the body." "Be patient, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord : behold, the husbandman waiteth long for the precious things of the earth, and hath much patience, till he receive the former and the latter rain ; be ye also patient and stablish your hearts." Then "those young and tender plants, which are now cut down and withering around us, shall spring up in fairer and more durable forms." "The children of the resurrection cannot die any more, but are equal to the angels."

4. *The departed shall return to their own border.*

The fourth consolatory reflection suggested to bereaved parents by these words is, that their children shall not only return from the land of the enemy, but "shall come again to their own border."

4. The departed shall return to their own border.

The captives of Judah were not only brought out of Babylon, they were brought into the Holy Land. The captives of death shall not only be brought out of the land of the king of terrors, but shall be brought into the heavenly Canaan, the

true land of Immanuel, their Redeemer and Lord and King. That is "their own border;"—"the kingdom prepared for them from before the foundation of the world," the inheritance bought for them by the precious blood of the incarnate Son.

Having been raised from the dead, they shall "mount up together in clouds," along with those who have been miraculously changed, "to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall they be for ever with the Lord." In that glorious company shall be found those infants and little children whose untimely departure to the land of the enemy drew forth such tender regrets and bitter tears. They shall not only "return," but "come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." They shall not only leave for ever the dark and lonesome abodes of death, but they shall for ever dwell in the cheerful regions of perfect life and light and joy. They shall not only be brought from the land of the enemy, but they shall be "brought in and be planted in the mountain of Jehovah's inheritance, in the place which he has made for himself to dwell in, in the sanctuary which his hand has established." There "Jehovah-Jesus shall reign

for ever and ever," and there "they shall reign with him." The long silence of the grave shall be exchanged for the ceaseless, ever-new songs of Moses and the Lamb. "Sing unto the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously. Who is like unto Jehovah among the gods? Who is like unto him? Glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders. He has ransomed us from the power of the grave. He has redeemed us from death. He has swallowed up death in life. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to him who has given us the victory. Salvation to our God and to the Lamb, for ever and ever! To him who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood; to him be glory and honour for ever and ever! Worthy is the Lamb that was slain—slain for us! Hallelujah!" And again and again and again the great multitude, with a voice as of many waters and mighty thunders, shall shout "Hallelujah!" and in all the happy company none will sing more sweetly than the little children.

"Babes thither caught from womb and breast,
Claim right to sing above the rest,
Because they found the happy shore
They neither saw nor sought before."¹

¹ Ralph Erskine.

Then, indeed, shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise."¹

II. Consola-
tions from
other con-
siderations.

Let me now very briefly call your attention to some other considerations calculated to comfort the bereaved parent, not directly suggested by the text. This painful event is the work of God.—It has removed our children from many evils and hazards to which they must have been exposed, had they continued to live here, and has placed them in happier circumstances than they ever could have been in here below.—It is fitted to produce important moral advantages to us.—We have the prospect of a speedy and happy reunion.—We may obtain even here, what will more than compensate our loss. These are considerations well fitted to moderate the grief of Christians who are weeping for their children.

1. The
bereave-
ment is the
work of
God.

1. *The bereavement is the work of God.*

Consider, then, "my brethren and companions in tribulation," in the first place, that the death of your children is the work of God. Yes, HE has done it. It is not the work of blind chance. It is not the result of unintelligent necessity. It is

¹ Psalm viii. 2; Matt. xxi. 6.

not the doing of diabolical or of human malignity. It is "the doing of the Lord"—the result of *His* counsel—the work of *His* hand. It is *HE* who has taken away.¹

Few Divine dispensations bear so deeply impressed on them the inscription, "It is the Lord," as death. He is very blind who cannot perceive this—he is very deaf who, in the silence of the death chamber, does not hear the voice—"Be still, and know that I am God."

When we take one view of the Divine Being, we see that all murmuring is most unreasonable and wicked ; when we take another view of His character, we see that perfect, cheerful, ay, joyful acquiescence, is most reasonable and right.

He is the supreme Sovereign, the absolute Proprietor, of all ; and has He not a right to do what He will with His own ? He is infinitely wise, "His understanding is unsearchable ;" and therefore there must be important and good reasons for His conduct, whether we be able to perceive them

¹ "Our times—*i.e.*, all events that are concerning us—and the timing of them, are all at God's dispose: they are not in our own hands, nor in our friends' hands, nor in our enemies' hands, but in God's. David does not in his prayers prescribe to God, but subscribe to Him. 'Lord, my times are in thy hand, and I am well pleased that they are so; they could not be in a better hand: thy will be done.'—MATTHEW HENRY on Psalm xxxi. 15.

or not. He is infinitely righteous, and can do nothing that is unjust. He cannot wrong *me*; the thing is impossible. I am a sinner. "It is of his mercies that I am not consumed." He has not wronged *my child*; He has but taken from it what He gave. This view of the Divine character ought to silence, but it will not satisfy. It may repress murmurs, but it will not produce child-like acquiescence.

But if I am a believer in Christ Jesus, this infinitely powerful and wise God is not only my supreme Sovereign—my absolute Proprietor—my most righteous Governor, but He is my Father in Christ Jesus, and the Father of my infant children—who loves me, who loves them, and who has assured me that "he will make all things work together" both for their good and mine. There can be nothing capricious—nothing unjust—nothing unkind, in His dispensations. "All his ways are mercy and truth." He cannot but be seeking a benignant end; and He cannot but be seeking that end by the wisest possible means. Even when His "wind passes over" our fairest flowers, and "they are gone," "his everlasting mercy is on them that fear him, and his righteousness manifested to their children's children."

Let the bereaved Christian parent, then, "sing in his heart, making melody to the Lord"—

"It is the Lord—enthroned in light,
Whose claims are all Divine,
Who has a most undoubted right
To govern me and mine.

"It is the Lord!—should I distrust
Or contradict His will,
Who cannot but do what is just,
And must be righteous still?

"It is the Lord—who gives me all
My wealth, my friends, my ease,
And of His bounties may recall
Whatever part He please.

"It is the Lord—whose matchless skill
Can from affliction raise
Blessings, eternity to fill
With ever-growing praise."¹

* * * *

"'Tis He that lifts our comforts high,
Who sinks them in the grave;
He gives, and, blessed be His name!
He takes but what He gave."

"Peace! all our angry passions then;
Let each rebellious sigh
Be silent at His sovereign will,
And every murmur die."²

2. *It has been advantageous to our children.*

Consider, in the second place, that the event so painful to us, has removed our children from many evils and hazards to which they must have been exposed, if they had continued to live, and has

². It has been advantageous to our Children.

¹ Greene.

² Watts.

placed them in far more advantageous circumstances than they ever could have attained to here below.

The world we live in is full of temptation and sin. Our children would have been exposed to temptation, and would have fallen into sin; and the best thing that, in that case, could have happened to them, would have been to be made to feel by bitter experience that "the way of transgressors is hard," and in weeping and supplication to come to God through Christ that they might obtain pardon. Their life might have been to us a greater affliction than their death has been; and after a scene of varied suffering both to themselves and us, they might have left us without any cheering hope of meeting them again in happier circumstances in a future world.

Even though we had been absolutely secured of their ultimate wellbeing, and of their turning out, as to character and conduct, all that a Christian parent could wish, how replete is the present scene with suffering, bodily, mental, relative! It is easy to conceive that the tenderest parent may see a child so severely and hopelessly afflicted, that the continuation of life is felt not to be desirable, and a speedy, quiet dismission becomes the object

of most earnest desire. When a person who has lost a dear child takes this view of the subject, he cannot help saying with Cecil, "How much better was it for my lamb to be suddenly housed, to slip unexpectedly into the fold to which I was conducting her, than remain exposed here!—perhaps become a victim."—"When I pass by the blaze of dissipation and intemperance, I feel a moment's relief; I say to my heart, 'Be still; at least she is not left to follow these *ignes fatui*,' these wild fires, which but lure their thoughtless followers to their doom. How much better is even the grave for my darling, than the end of these things!"¹ "When our Saviour was on earth, mothers pressed with their infants to let them be encircled in those loving arms, and have His hand rest upon their little heads one moment. Why should they repine that He takes them from their unsafe guardianship, and folds them in the everlasting arms for ever? that they are gone where they are to know only good without evil, and joy without sorrow."²

If the views we have taken be correct, the Christian parent has good ground for believing that his infant children are not only secure, but

¹ *Visit to the House of Mourning.*

² Rogers.

happy—incapable of suffering, temptation, sin, and death ; they neither feel nor fear evil ; no accident can befall them, no disease afflict them, no temptation assail them, no sin pollute them. “ How great a part of Divine magnificence is it to take a reasonable immortal spirit from animating a piece of well-figured clay and presently adjoin it to the assembly above ! How glorious a change is made upon our child in a moment ! How much greater a thing is it to be adoring God above in the society of angels, than to be dandled on our knee, or to enjoy the best provisions we could make for them on earth ! That they have a part to act upon an eternal stage, and though but lately come into being, are never to go out of being more, but to be everlasting monuments and instruments of the glory of their great Creator and Lord.”¹ “ God,” to use the language of a writer of the last age, “ has sent for His children home, whom He gave us to nurse for Him, and we must have a very good conceit of ourselves, if we think they are worse provided for, or less safe, than when we had the charge of them. Much as they were delighted with our embraces, they would not leave the arms of God for ours.”²

The unreasonableness of mourning, and refusing

¹ Howe.

² Grove.

to be comforted for young children, who, we have reason to think, are gone to be with Christ, has been thus powerfully put : Suppose two children, both 'vessels of mercy.' The one is taken to heaven in infancy or early youth, and the other is spared till seventy years have passed over him. Which of these is most highly favoured ? The one in heaven has been instructed by Jesus Himself, has associated with patriarchs and prophets and apostles, has held intercourse with angels, and has obtained magnificent ideas of Divine things. The other has been exposed to trials and temptations, has laboured, under much imperfection, to serve God, and has at last got the victory, through "Him who loved him." When he enters heaven, how limited are his attainments compared with those of his celestial brother !¹ Which of the two lots, looking merely to the happiness of his child, would an enlightened Christian parent choose for him ? And is it reasonable to mourn excessively, because by an event, painful to our feelings, the very best of good things has fallen to the lot of one so dear to us ?

3. *It is fitted to be advantageous to ourselves.*

Consider, in the third place, that the event so

3. It is fitted
to be advan-
tageous to
ourselves.

¹ Somervillo.

painful to us, is fitted, if we do not misimprove it, to produce to us important spiritual advantages.

All Affliction is fitted and intended to be useful to the Christian ;

The benignant design and the salutary tendency of afflictive dispensations generally, are considerations well calculated to produce submission and acquiescence. The design of affliction is to make bad men good, and good men better ; to make the thoughtless considerate, and the considerate wise. " The rod and reproof give wisdom." To " try, to purify, to make white," is the object of all the sufferings to which God's people are exposed. He " judges them, that they may not be condemned with the world." He " chastens them, that they may be made partakers of his holiness."

and is so—when not counteracted,

And when not counteracted by our folly and sin, they serve these purposes. It is found good and advantageous to be afflicted ; and though " no chastisement for the present be joyous but grievous," yet " it is a faithful saying,"—" afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness, to those who are exercised by it."

Few Afflictions so much fitted to do good as the loss of Little Children.

Few afflictions are more fitted to promote our spiritual improvement, than the loss of children ; and it has been justly remarked, that no means of trial is more common, no instrument of spiritual good more frequently wielded by our heavenly

Father, than this. It teaches us the danger of seeking our supreme happiness in any object but God. It is easy to see how wicked it is to seek happiness in forbidden indulgences, in criminal pursuits. It is not difficult to see how foolish it is to look to worldly wealth or honours or pleasures, as the principal source of happiness, their nature and their uncertainty equally unfitting them for this purpose. But to love our children is natural, is dutiful. They are the fit objects of a very ardent affection, and we know they can communicate a very pure and exquisite happiness. For these very reasons, we are in the greater danger of placing them in the room of Him who gave them to us. This takes place in a degree that parents are often unconscious of, till, when deprived of them, they seem as if deprived of all; and the conclusion is forced on them—‘We have made them our gods, for when they are taken from us, what have we more?’ The dispensation is intended to make us feel how hazardous, as well as sinful it is, to place any created being in the place of God; and if it serves its purpose, in leading us to concentrate our affections on the unchangeable, undying, all-excellent One, temporary suffering will lead to permanent satisfaction,—“peace and security for ever.”

(1.) It teaches the danger of seeking happiness in anything but God.

(2.) It shows
the vanity
of the
world, and
wears us
from it.

The death of children is well fitted to convince us of the vanity of this world, and to draw away our affections from it. One of the most plausible excuses under which the love of the world cloaks an undue interest in its pursuits, is, that we have children to provide for. It is undoubtedly our duty to provide for our children; he who does not, "denies the faith, and is worse than an infidel." But this may be done without an entire devotedness to worldly pursuits, to which too many—really from the love of the world, professedly from a regard to their families—give themselves up. When the children for whom "we rose early, sat late, and ate the bread of carefulness," are snatched away, what is the use of the wealth we may have amassed to *them*—to *us*? "Whose shall those things be, which we have provided?" How much better would it have been, to have devoted more time to conferring on them a kind of property they could have carried along with them into the eternal world—a kind of property that would have enriched them and blessed us for ever?

(3.) It
deepens the
impression
of the
reality and
nearness
of the in-
visible state.

The death of children is well fitted to deepen our impressions of the reality and nearness of the invisible state. The business and enjoyments of the world have an intoxicating influence. They

make us mistake shadows for realities, and realities for shadows. We think of the unseen world as something indistinct and distant ; and disappearing, but too frequently, altogether from the field of mental vision, it exercises little or no influence on our thoughts and affections. The death of those with whom we are nearly connected, to whom we are fondly attached, is fitted to sober us. A window is, as it were, opened into the invisible state ; the veil is partially withdrawn. He is strangely infatuated, who, when, as it were, one portion of himself after another is falling into the grave, still thinks of death as a distant event ; of the invisible state as an abstraction or a dream.

Few things are of higher importance than habitual impressions of the reality and nearness of the unseen state. Indeed, true religion consisting in a great measure in being under the power of the world to come, whatever enlarges and deepens this influence, must contribute in an eminent degree to our improvement.

The death of children has a tendency to lead us to prepare for death, diminishing the excessive love of life, and enabling us to submit, without reluctance, to that inevitable event. Are not the fol-

(4.) It leads us to prepare for death.

lowing reflections, by the pious Doddridge, on laying a child in the grave, natural, and are they not fitted to be useful? "Has my child died in the morning of his day; and shall I dare to count on my life being protracted till the shadows of the evening have fallen? Is not the grave ready for *me*? Am I ready for the grave? One of my family is gone to take possession of the grave in my name. Ere long I shall lie down in the same bed; our dust will shortly be blended together. Surely this is intended as a warning to me to be ready, an intimation that my few remaining days may be more regular, more spiritual, more useful, than the former."

Friends, especially children, are among the strongest bands which bind us to life.

"As those we love decay, we die in part;
String after string is sever'd from the heart,
Till loosen'd life at last, but breathing clay,
Without one pang, is glad to fall away.
Unhappy he, who latest feels the blow,
Whose heart has bled o'er every friend laid low,
Dragg'd ling'ring on from partial death to death,
Till, dying, all he can resign is breath."¹

Where there is hope beyond death, the loss of what makes life most delightful naturally induces the sentiment so beautifully expressed by Job: "I

¹ Thomson.

loathe it ; I would not live away." The grave seems ready for us, and we would be "glad to find it." The heart accords with the most pathetic wish : "O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave ; that thou wouldest keep me secret till thy wrath be past ; that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me !"

Finally here—the death of children is calculated to stir us up to greater diligence in duty, especially in reference to the children who still remain with us. It speaks such words as these to the heart, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might, for there is neither wisdom, nor device, nor knowledge, nor work in the grave, whither" thyself and thy children *must* soon, *may* suddenly, go.

(5.) It stirs us up to greater activity in duty.

Thoughtful parents seldom lay a child in the grave, without a painful feeling that they might have done, that they ought to have done, more for serving its highest interests than they have done. When no such regrets are felt, it is not a proof that the duty has been carefully performed, but a presumption that the nature of parental duty is ill understood, and the obligation of it not at all felt : it is the symptom, not of a clear conscience, but of a seared one. The feeling referred to is a

very painful one, partaking of the character of remorse—self-reproach for the neglect of a duty which can never now be performed ; but the anguish, if rightly improved, may be very profitable both to ourselves and to our surviving children.

4. There is the prospect of a happy and not distant re-union.

4. *There is the prospect of a happy and not distant re-union.*

Consider, in the fourth place, that if we are indeed Christians, we have the prospect of a happy and not distant, re-union with the children of whom we have been bereaved.

To a Christian parent mourning the death of little children, there is much consolation in the reflection which quieted the mind of David when deprived of a child very dear to him, "I shall go to him." "When a few years are come, I too must go the way whence I shall never return." 'If my children had not left me, I must have left them, and, in this case, the pang of separation might not have been less painful, nor the period of separation shorter, than in the case that has occurred. I shall soon go to the grave to my children ; we shall mingle our ashes in the dust, 'where the wicked cease from troubling, where the weary are at rest.' I shall soon go to my children

in the world of spirits, and there be with them, where they are with the Lord ; and the meeting, which cannot be distant, will be a meeting never to part. We shall be together in the resurrection, together at the judgment-seat ; together shall we ascend to heaven, and together we shall be for ever with the Lord. Though they have departed for a season, it is that I should receive them for ever. They are gone to finish their education under far more favourable circumstances than they could have prosecuted it in this world ; and when we meet, which must be ere long, I shall find them in holiness and happiness,—all I could desire, more than I can conceive.’ “They are still our children, objects of our love, worthier now that they are purified from mortality. In that land of love where they now dwell, we cannot doubt that they remember us with peculiar affection ; and shall we not cherish for them an affection suited to their improved character and situation ? Let us follow them with a purified love ; let us ascend, even now, by faith, to the world of spirits, and rejoice in their joy. Thus will they still be our companions, our comfort, our hope, in the house of our pilgrimage.”¹

¹ Charters.

5. The loss
may be
compensated even
here.

5. *The loss may be compensated even here.*

Finally, consider that even here we may obtain what will more than compensate our loss, and all the pain it has occasioned to us.

(1.) In a
fuller en-
joyment of
God.

God is the source of all true happiness. There is in Him what can more than make up for the privation of any earthly good. If we can but realize more thoroughly, in consequence of our bereavement, the fulness which we have in God, we are made really both happier and better by the dispensation. "The Lord is my portion, saith my soul, therefore will I trust in him." "He is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever." Well may God say to those to whom He is a God, and who are His people, "Why weepest thou? am not I better to thee than ten children?" they are dead, but *I* live. They could not make you happy without me; and now that they are dead, cannot *I* make you happy without them? Though they had lived, you must have died; but "because I live, ye shall live also." Amid the desolation of all earthly happiness, in the full assurance of faith, we may be enabled to say, "I rejoice in the Lord, I joy in the God of my salvation." I believed it before, but I now feel it. "His loving-kindness is better than life;" He is more than all the world

to me ; He is "the health of my countenance and my God." Jesus takes His people in the room of all relatives. They are, He says, "his brother, and sister, and mother." And when *He* is seen and felt to be what He is, we find, equally, that no relative can be to us what He is ; and that He can be to us all—far more than all relatives can be to us ; and when they are taken from us, we should say, 'Thou, thou art my child, my sister, my brother, my mother.' In Thee I have all and abound. It has been touchingly said, "If our Lord, and his Father, and the Comforter, come to us, dwell with us, sup with us, as they will, if we, in a believing, submissive spirit, invite their company, we may surely be content though our children sit not at table, especially when we know that their absence is occasioned by their removal to a nobler apartment in our Father's palace, to partake of a richer entertainment."¹

Besides, it may please God to supply the blank (2.) In a variety of other ways. in a variety of ways. He may give us an increase of comfort from various sources. He may give us other children, as in the case of Job and of Ephraim ; or He may give us enlarged enjoyment in our surviving children ; or He may raise

¹ Grove.

up to be as children to us, those entirely unconnected by the filial relation. Was not Ruth better to Naomi than both of her sons ?

So much for some of the principal consolations which are provided in our text, and in other passages of Scripture, for parents who are mourning the premature death of their children.

I conclude this section of the discourse with a reflection which, I am sure, has already suggested itself to the minds of many of you.

How in-
valuably
precious is
the word
of God !

How invaluable precious is the word of God ! How suitable, how abundant, the consolations it ministers under all the varied and multiplied afflictions to which we are liable in this world of change and sorrow ! Where can the bereaved parent go with success for comfort, but to his Bible ? There, there only, can he find "abundant consolation and good hope." Indeed, where can any sufferer find availing support and comfort but there ?

" Where should the living, weeping o'er his woes,
The dying, trembling at the awful close ;
Where the betray'd, forsaken and oppress'd,
The thousands whom the world forbids to rest ;
Where should they find (those comforts at an end,
The gospel gives), or hope to find, a friend ?
Sorrow might muse herself to madness then,
And, seeking exile from the sight of men,
Fury herself in solitude profound,
Grow frantic with her pangs, and bite the ground.

* * * * *

That field of promise, how it flings abroad
Its odours o'er the Christian's thorny road !
The soul, reposing on assured relief,
Feels herself happy amid all her grief,
Forgets her labours as she toils along,
Weeps tears of joy, and bursts into a song."¹

Let us learn to prize our Bibles still more.
"Let the word of Christ dwell in us richly in all wisdom." Let us seek, "through patience and comfort of the Scriptures to have hope" ourselves, in the day of affliction ; and in performing a duty we are often called to—the comforting of mourners, let us lead them to those inexhaustible springs of consolation, which are open to all sufferers who will but comply with the kind invitation of Him, who is still, as "on the last, the great day of the feast," proclaiming, "If any man thirst, let him come to ME and drink."

¹ Cowper.

PART III.

PROPER EFFECT OF THESE CONSOLATIONS.

It only remains now, to complete the plan laid down when we entered on the consideration of this subject, that we attend to the effect which these consolatory considerations ought to have on the minds of Christian parents who have been bereaved of their children. "Thus saith the Lord, Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears." They are not intended to prevent sorrow ; but they are intended, first to moderate and then to restrain it. Bereaved parents are not forbidden to weep ; but they are required to set bounds, both as to degree and continuance, to their sorrows. They are not to be "swallowed up with overmuch sorrow ;" they are not to refuse to be comforted, "sorrowing as those who have no hope." I shall, for the illustration of these points, which may be considered as the practical part of the subject, show, first, that there is a

sorrow for the death of children which is not forbidden, and then, that there is a sorrow for the loss of children which is forbidden, in these words, "Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears."

Insensibility under afflictive dispensations of Providence is certainly by no means desirable. Unfelt afflictions must be unimproved afflictions. If I do not feel the chastisement of my heavenly Father, it is to me as if it were not. How can "the rod and reproof give wisdom" to him who feels no pain from the one, no self-condemnation from the other? Such insensibility is sometimes the indication of physical defect, sometimes the result of moral depravity; never the manifestation of just thinking and right feeling—the symptom of a sound constitution of mind, or of an estimable disposition of heart. In the last of the supposed cases, he who is characterized by it is the fit object of high moral blame, in the first of pity, unmixed with love; but in no case has he any claim on moral approbation. It is not fortitude to bear what we do not feel, and it is not becoming magnanimity but impious stupidity, to "despise the chastening of the Lord." Such conduct draws

I. Negative
Not intended
to produce
insensibility

down a severe rebuke—"Thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved."

As there is nothing wrong in feeling the afflictions God lays on us, as indeed they must be felt to serve their purpose, so neither is there anything wrong in our giving expression to our feelings. It is natural for deep feeling to seek expression. There is relief to a certain degree in giving vent to our sorrow ; and the religion of the Bible makes war on nothing in human nature but its depravity. There was nothing wrong in Job's rending his garments ;¹ there was nothing wrong in David's fasting and lying all night on the earth.² We are warranted to express in words and tears, both to God and to man, our sense of the affliction we have met with. Indeed, when our spirits are overwhelmed within us, we can do nothing better than pour out our complaint before the Lord, and say, with Hezekiah, "O Lord, I am oppressed ; undertake for me." Oh, my Father, pity, sustain, deliver me. We also may, without blame, express our feelings to our fellow-men. "Have pity, have pity on me, O my friends," was the language of the most patient of men ; and many have found that the unbosoming one's sorrows to a friend is

¹ Job i. 20.

² 2 Sam. xii. 16.

a sensible relief to the oppressed and bursting heart.

But while the command does not forbid us either to feel or express sorrow, it does forbid us to indulge sorrow to an undue degree, and to express sorrow in an unbecoming manner. Sorrow for the loss of children is extreme and blameable, when it leads us to overlook, or lightly to estimate, the blessings which we still enjoy. It has been justly said, that "Our tears for our lost enjoyments are apt so to blind our eyes, that we do not see the many mercies which yet remain."¹ He has taken away *one* gift; but how many has he left behind? Had he taken them *all* away, there had been no reasonable ground of complaint. Surely, then, when but one of the forfeited blessings (for they are all forfeited) is taken away, and so many left, regret for the loss of the one should not supersede gratitude for the continuance of the many. "We must not," as worthy Mr. Flavel says, "we must not write Ichabod upon all our blessings, because God has written mortality on one of them."

Another evidence that our sorrow for the loss of our children is excessive, is when it so occupies

II. Positive
—Intended
to repress
the excessive
indulgence and
unbecoming
expression
of sorrow.
Tokens of
excessive
sorrow—
1. If it
lead us to
underrate
blessings
still enjoyed.

2. If it unfit
us for the
discharge of
our duties.

¹ Flavel.

our mind, as to unfit us for the right discharge of our duties, in the various situations in which God has been pleased to place us. Affliction of all kinds is intended to quicken, not to paralyse ; and its end is frustrated when "the health of the body sinks under the influence of confinement, and fasting, and watchfulness, and the vigour of the mind is broken by dark forebodings."

"Weeping," as Mr Henry says, "must not hinder worshipping ; nor must sorrow so be indulged as to prevent enjoying gratefully the comforts, and performing conscientiously the duties, of relative life."

3. If it leads
to hard
thoughts
of God.

In fine, that sorrow is excessive which leads us to indulge hard thoughts of God, as if His treatment of us or of ours had been unwise, unjust, or unkind ; and which would prevent us from saying, with our whole heart, "The will of the Lord be done." "Good is the will of the Lord." "Not my will, but thine be done." "The Lord gave ; the Lord hath taken away : blessed be the name of the Lord."

Right be-
haviour
under the
loss of
Children
exempli-
fied.

The moderate, subdued, submissive, mourning which religion not only permits, but requires, is, like most duties, perhaps best illustrated by examples. And such examples are by no means

wanting in the sacred history. "Take, my brethren," those "elders who have obtained a good report," "for an example of suffering affliction and of patience."

When Jehovah proved that He was a consuming fire, and was determined to be sanctified in them who came near to Him, by destroying Aaron's two sons, who had offered strange fire before Him, that saint of God maintained a humble resigned silence. "Aaron held his peace;"¹ he was dumb, not opening his mouth. "It was a speaking silence," as Matthew Henry says. "It said, If God be sanctified, Aaron is satisfied."

When the whole of Job's family perished in the overthrow of their elder brother's house by the desert blast, that perfect and upright man "arose and rent his mantle, and covered his head, and fell down on the ground, and worshipped, and said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither; the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly."

Eli, on learning the dreadful doom that awaited his children, and his children's children, humbly

¹ Lev. x. 3.

and submissively bowed to the Divine, righteous though awful, decree : “It is the Lord : let him do that which seemeth good in his sight.”¹

David.

Of all the recorded examples of dutiful suffering under bereavement, recorded in Scripture, none is more rich in appropriate instruction to parents mourning the loss of young children, than that of David. The narrative is so full of beauty and interest, that I give it in the inspired historian's own words :—“The Lord struck the child that Uriah's wife bare to David, and it was very sick. David, therefore, besought God for the child, and David fasted, and went in, and lay all night upon the earth. And the elders of his house arose, and went to him to raise him up from the earth ; but he would not, neither did he eat bread with them. And it came to pass on the seventh day that the child died : and the servants of David feared to tell him that the child was dead : for they said, Behold, while the child was yet alive we spake unto him, and he would not hearken unto our voice ; how will he then vex himself, if we tell him that the child is dead ? But when David saw that his servants whispered, David perceived that the child was dead : therefore David said unto

¹ 2 Sam. iii. 18.

his servants, Is the child dead ? and they said, He is dead. Then David arose from the earth, and washed and anointed himself, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the Lord, and worshipped : then he came to his own house ; and when he required they set bread before him, and he did eat. Then said his servants to him, What thing is this that thou hast done ? Thou didst fast and weep for the child while it was alive ; but when the child was dead thou didst rise and eat bread. And he said, While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept ; for I said, Who can tell whether God will be gracious to me, that the child may live ? But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast ? Can I bring him back again ? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.”¹

David, I am persuaded, could not have borne his affliction in this way, had he been in the state of mind in which he was but a very short while before, with a sense of unconfessed, unpardoned guilt on his conscience. But he had “acknowledged his sin to the Lord ; he had not hid his iniquity ; he had confessed his transgression, and the Lord had forgiven him the iniquity of his sin.” “I have sinned against the Lord,” said he in deep

¹ 2 Sam. xii. 15-23.

contrition to the prophet Nathan ; and Nathan had said to him in the name of the Lord, "The Lord also hath put away thy sin : thou shalt not die."¹ It is the faith of forgiving mercy that alone can enable a man, with child-like submission, with hearty acquiescence, to bow under the chastening hand of God. It was Luther, I think, who said, "Strike, O Lord !—*seeing* Thou hast forgiven me all my trespasses."

Mary, the
mother of
our Lord.

There is a still more touching picture of silent suffering presented to us in the inspired page—"There stood by the cross of Jesus his mother." Was there ever mere mortal sorrow like her sorrow ? Simeon's prediction is now fulfilled. "A sword pierced through her soul." Yet, to use the words of an old divine, "She stood without clamour or womanish noises, sad and silent, and with a modest grief, deep as the waters of the abyss, but smooth as the face of a pool, full of love, and patience, and sorrow, and hope : but her hope drew a veil before her sorrow, and though her grief was great enough to swallow her up, yet her love was greater, and did swallow up her grief."² This is a fancy sketch, but who can doubt that it is true as to the life ?

¹ 2 Sam. xii. 13.

² Jeremy Taylor, *Life of Christ*.

True religion is the same in all ages. I shall, ere leaving this part of the subject, bring before your notice two or three instances from later times, of the right way of bearing the loss of children.

The first example of suffering and patience shall be that good and great man, EBENEZER ERSKINE, who is sometimes called the father of our religious denomination. On the death of one child we find him saying, "I find that since the death of the child, my soul has been more quickened in the way of duty than formerly, more lively in prayer, more resolved to follow the Lord, and to cleave to Him. I find that I needed this spur of affliction, to excite me to my duty, and it has made me more importunate in behalf of my poor child who is a-dying." And on a second death he says, "I have grounds of hope that my sweet Henry is now praising and triumphing with Christ in glory." On the death of a third child,¹ of five years of age, he says, "I cannot express the grief of my heart for the loss of this child, the other two strokes being so late (recent). The Lord make me content with His dispensations, and give me the sanctified use of these repeated breaches He has made upon my poor family. I hope to be gathered unto

Ebenezer
Erskine.

¹ These three deaths took place within the space of one year.

Christ with my little ones ere long. I have had a sore parting, but they and I, I hope, shall have a joyful meeting. O' that I were fit for the work which my pleasant babes are now employed in ! If I get the eternal Son of God into my heart, I shall not be at a loss for my three sons that are gone. O Lord, let me find upmaking in thyself. I am content to be bereaved of all I have in the world, if thou wilt give me thyself as my sure portion."

On the death of another child, a little daughter, he writes thus :—"Upon the 7th day of December, my dear, sweet, and pleasant child, Isabel Erskine, died of the small-pox, on the ninth day of the eruption. I got freedom during her sickness, particularly the same forenoon before she died, to present her before the Lord, and to plead his covenant on her behalf. The Lord enabled me to quit her freely to Him, on this account, that He had a far better title to her than I. She was mine only as her earthly father. She is His, by creation, preservation, by dedication to Him in baptism, and His also, I hope, by covenant and redemption, and therefore, I am persuaded, she is now His by glorification ; and that she is with the Lord Jesus, and with her dear mother, triumphing with God in glory. I

had a particular affection for the child, and doted but too much upon her, because she was the likeliest her mother of any of the children, both as to her countenance and humour. But I see that the Lord will not allow me to have any idols, but will have the whole of my heart to Himself. And, Lord, let it be so. Amen, and amen. She died pleasantly, without any visible pang or throe; her soul, I hope, being carried by angels into Abraham's bosom, and her body buried by her mother's side in her brother's grave. I take it kindly that the Lord comes to my family to gather lilies wherewith to garnish the upper sanctuary; 'for of such is the kingdom of heaven.' And oh, it sometimes affords me a pleasing prospect to think, I have so much *plenishin*¹ in heaven before me, and that, when I enter the gates of glory, I shall not only be welcomed by the whole general assembly of saints and angels, but my wife and four pleasant babes will, in a particular manner, welcome me to those regions of glory, and I shall join in the hallelujahs of the higher house, which shall never have an end."²

¹ *Scottic*, household property.

² *Fraser's Life and Diary of the Rev. Ebenezer Erskine*, pp. 268, 269, 301, 302. A condensed Memoir of Ebenezer Erskine, by the Rev. Dr. Harper, of distinguished merit, forms part of one of the

The second example, in some respects a still more striking one, is JOHN GLAS, one of the first who in this country was enlightened in the true spiritual character of the kingdom of Christ. His son and daughter-in-law, with a sweet little granddaughter, during their voyage to Britain from a foreign country, were most cruelly murdered by pirates. Mr. Glas was at that time living in Perth, and eagerly expecting to hear of the arrival of his beloved son and family. Mr. Thomas Sandeman, who was accustomed to bring him the newspaper, was thunderstruck when he read in it the intelligence of the murder, and at the utmost loss how to communicate the unexpected event. But it must be done. The paper was laid before the old man in silence, and his friend pointed to the mournful paragraph. The aged father read it, and, like Aaron, held his peace. "Perhaps," said his friend, breaking the solemn silence, "perhaps it may not be true." "It is too circumstantially told," said the venerable man, "not to be true;" and after a short pause, added, "It is the Lord; His will be done." He removed to his closet for a short time, and afterwards received

volumes of that ably conducted publication, *The United Presbyterian Fathers*.

the condolence of several brethren who came to express their sympathy with him in this mournful event. He bore his affliction with much composure, and some hours afterwards joined the church at their ordinary worship, with a tranquillity which astonished them.

Some weeks after, when accounts arrived from Ireland of the trial and execution of the murderers, he expressed himself thus: "It would be a glorious instance of Divine mercy and sovereign goodness, if George Glas and his murderers should meet together in heaven;" thus imitating Him who said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."¹

The other example of becoming behaviour under bereavement I refer to, is the late WILLIAM HEY William He of Leeds, one of the most distinguished surgeons of his time. He thus expresses himself on the day on which he was to lay the last of eight children in the grave. "O Lord, I would offer my most hearty and solemn thanksgivings for thy mercies shown to my dear children. Four of them thou wast pleased to call out of this dangerous and sinful world during the state of infancy.

¹ Memoir of Glas, prefixed to his *Narrative of the Rise and Progress of the Controversy respecting the National Covenants*, p. 31.

I surrendered them to thee in the holy ordinance of baptism, and committed them to thy disposal. Thou didst remove them ere the pollutions of the world had led their corrupt hearts astray, and I humbly hope thou didst receive them to thy glory. Concerning other four, whom thou hast called hence in adult age, thou hast graciously given me the most solid hopes. They were early taught, by thy grace, to flee for refuge to the Friend of sinners, and thou didst prolong their lives till they had given clear proofs of a sound conversion. Though prepared, as I hope, to glorify thee on the earth, thou didst dispense with their services, and didst remove them hence in the beginning of their usefulness. But thy grace was with them. In their sickness, and at the approach of death, they were enabled to rejoice in thy salvation. The last of them, I am this day to commit to the silent grave, but in the sure and certain hope of a joyful resurrection to eternal life. What shall I render to thee for all thy mercies ! O that my future life might more abundantly show forth thy praise ! ”¹

¹ Pearson's *Life of Hey*, vol. ii. pp. 89, 90. I should have been disposed to bring forward here a fourth “example of suffering affliction and of patience”—the distinguished German biblical critic and commentator, BÄNGEL, who has been described, by one who knew him

CONCLUSION.

AND now for the practical personal improvement of all that has been said in this discourse.

1. Let bereaved Christian parents, who may, like Rachel, be weeping for their children, endeavour to act out that holy, resigned, cheerful suffering, which, both in precept and example, I have endeavoured to bring before their minds.

1. Exhortation to Bereaved Christian Parents.

Let them remember that they cannot harden themselves in sorrow without disregarding the highest authority. "THUS SAITH THE LORD, Refrain thy voice from weeping and thine eyes from tears." When HE says, Be still ; the tempestuous

well, as being "as pious as he was industrious, as child-like as he was learned, as rich in spirit as he was acute in mind, as humble as he was great ;"—"eyes to the blind, counsel to the seeing, a leader to the weak, a pattern to the strong, a luminary to the learned, an ornament to the church." The extracts illustrative of his exercise of mind on the loss of children are too long to be introduced into the text. As they are singularly beautiful, and much calculated to soothe and to instruct bereaved parents, and as they are not at all likely otherwise to come under the notice of the great body of those for whose benefit this little book is intended, I have inserted them in the Appendix, No. I.

ocean becomes calm ; and shall the tempest of your grief be less controllable ?

It is the voice of pity and love as well as authority. Jesus had compassion upon the widow of Nain, and said, "Weep not." He forbids you but to do what would dishonour Him and injure yourselves and others.

He gives good reasons for the command. "Thy work shall be rewarded—thy children shall come again from the land of the enemy—there is hope in thine end—and thy children shall come again to their own border." And all this is as sure as the repeated declaration, "Thus saith the Lord," can make it. "By two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie," He gives you strong consolation. He draws you to obedience "with cords of a man, with bands of love."

Say if all I have brought forward in the form of consolatory consideration be not true ? and if it be true, is it reasonable to give yourself up to hopeless regrets and unavailing sorrow ? Put not away from you these strong consolations. Seek the promised influence of the good Spirit, who is the Comforter, to unlock to you these "wells of salvation," and to enable you to drink of them

till you forget your sorrows, and remember your misery no more.

Seek deliverance from the "evil heart of unbelief," and you will find, to your happy experience, that "according to your faith, so shall it be to you." When you think of your children as in the land of the enemy, realize their certain and joyful emancipation and return, and let your thoughts chiefly dwell on your "own border," "the better country, even the heavenly," where, in perfect happiness and perfect security, you and they shall for ever dwell.

"Let us," as Dr. Doddridge says, "be much concerned that we may not bear all the smart of such an affliction, and, through our folly, lose all the benefit which otherwise might be a rich equivalent. 'Let us search and try our ways, that we turn again to the Lord.' Let us pray that, through our tears, we may read our duty, and that by the heat of the furnace we may be so melted, that our dross may be purged away, and the Divine image enstamped on our souls in brighter and fairer characters."

"In one word, let us set our hearts more on that God who is infinitely better to us than ten children ; who hath, we trust, given us 'a name

better than that of sons and daughters—an everlasting memorial that shall not be cut off ;' and who can abundantly supply the place of all earthly enjoyments with the rich communications of His grace."

Thus shall we be enabled to "glorify our God in the fires ;" thus shall "tribulation work patience, and patience experience, and experience hope," the hope which makes not ashamed ; thus shall "the chastisement, though for the present not joyous, but grievous, afterwards," in time and eternity, on earth and in heaven, "yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness to us who have been exercised"—disciplined—"by it."

Exhortation to
increased
religious
parents.

2. The whole of this discourse has been addressed to religious parents. But there are many irreligious parents—irreligious parents "weeping for their children, and refusing to be comforted, because they are not." I pity, sincerely, deeply pity, such persons. But I can say little to comfort them. I have good hope as to the final happiness even of *their* infant offspring ; but while they are unbelievers, they cannot be partakers of that hope, nor of the satisfaction which grows out of it. O that I could make them feel the salutary terror naturally connected with

the thought that, unless they repent, "there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth," when they see their own infant children "sitting down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God, while they themselves are shut out."

With regard to their children who have lived long enough to "serve themselves," as Mr. Boston says, "heirs to their sad inheritance"—to take actual possession of it in personal guilt and developed depravity, and who, through sinful neglect, lived and died in ignorance both of their danger and the only way of escape, what can be said but what the prophet says, "They have died in their iniquity," but their blood will God require at their unnatural parents' hands.

To such most pitiable parents, if I could get their ear, I would say, 'You have injured your children irreparably ; add not to their misery by going to them to "that place of torment," to which your carelessness and their own guilt have consigned them. Deeply as you have injured them, a fear of increased misery renders them desirous you should never come there. Comply with that desire, it is the only way you can now do them a favour. To them this is but on your part *equity*, while to yourselves it is the highest wisdom.'

‘ Their state is hopeless, but yours is not yet so. That is a land of the enemy from which there is no rescue, no return. But there is here pardon, there is here salvation even for you, murderers of the souls of your own children, if you will but accept it. “ The blood of Jesus Christ, God’s Son, cleanseth from all sin.”

‘ Have you children still remaining with you ? For their sakes, as well as your own, and that of the hopelessly lost—turn—believe—live. “ As you value your own happiness, and that of those who are dear to you, in the faith of the gospel take the Lord for your God and the God of your seed. In committing yourselves to the Redeemer’s mercy, you place your families under His shadow ; and what makes your salvation certain makes theirs probable.” ¹ Listen to this expression of Divine compassion for you, even for you. It is enough to melt the most hell-hardened heart. “ O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them and with their children for ever.”

‘ Are you not crying, What must we do for our own salvation—for the salvation of our children ?

¹ Belfrage.

The first thing to be done, which will secure that all the rest shall follow, is to comply with the apostle's command. It is addressed to you as well as to the jailer of Philippi : " Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." '

Should this be the result, the loss of the child will be the occasion of the salvation of the parent ; the death of one child be the life of the rest ; and there will be additional reason given to " the principalities and powers in the heavenly places " to wonder through eternity at the wisdom and grace of Him who

" From seeming evil still educes good,
And better thence again, and better still,
In infinite progression." ¹

and who can and will bring the greatest real good out of the greatest real evil.

" O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God ! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out ! For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things : to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen." ²

¹ Thomson.

² Rom. xi. 33, 36.



APPENDIX.

1. The first part of the document is a list of names and titles, including "The Hon. Mr. Justice" and "The Hon. Mr. Justice".

2.

3.

APPENDIX.

No. I.

BENGEL ON THE DEATH OF HIS CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN.

BENGEL had twelve children, six of whom died in their infancy. The early loss of these children occasioned severe sufferings to so affectionate a father. The following extracts will show with what meek resignation he submitted to the chastisement of his heavenly Father :—

ON THE DEATH OF SOME OF HIS CHILDREN.

“Our joy of late has been considerably moderated by many a concern about our dear children. In endeavouring to cheer myself and others under the cross which continually attends us, I find use enough for what Christian knowledge and experience I have acquired.

“Our heavenly Father has again brought my dear wife safely through her sorrows. On the morning of the 29th of August, the same day on which, three years ago, our little Joanna Regina, now reposing in the churchyard, was born, we received in safety a healthy little girl, to whom, as she was born on the

same day of the year, we have given a similar name, Anna Regina. We would not choose quite the same name, because we thought it ought to have some distinction from hers, whom we still regard as one of the family, though she is fallen asleep."

That child lived only a year. The following very interesting and affecting letter was written by Bengel to his parents, immediately after her funeral :—

"We thank you for the wreaths you sent us, to dress the coffin of our departed and still beloved child, Anna Regina ; and we thank you still more for your affectionate and parental sympathy, as also for your consoling letter. I feel constrained to give you, in return, some simple account of what God has discovered to us under this visitation of His love.

"When, six weeks before our child's illness, I was suffering by scarlet fever, I endeavoured, as I had done during a former illness, to get my heart into a state of more than ordinary tenderness ; but I was unable, this time, to bring my feelings into such entire self-abasement as I wished. I complained of it to a friend who visited me, and expressed to him my expectation that some severer affliction, which would better answer the purpose, awaited me. It has arrived, and answered my wishes. While our dear child was lying under so much suffering, and very near its end, I felt the keenest pangs at the thought of losing it ; far more so than I had ever felt before, even when I lost our other dear children. Indeed, no occasion of the kind ever distressed me so much. Still I was enabled, without feeling the

presence of others any interruption, to attend the dear child with prayers, supplications, and tears, till its soul had gained the victory. I was led, during the whole time, to meditate deeply upon two things : 1st, The righteousness of God which had thus disfigured and destroyed such a little tender frame of body, on account of sin inherited from its parents, and through us from the stock of Adam ; and 2d, That grace of God by which such a transit through death conducts to life everlasting. Hence, our little sufferer's pitiable convulsions and labourings for breath no longer aggravated my distress. My spirit became so cheered and strengthened, that, notwithstanding this additional affliction, at the prospect of another bereavement, I felt in the inward man more comfort and enjoyment than I had ever realized in the best pleasures of my life. And as I reclined my head upon my dying child's little couch, I thought I could gladly die with it that moment.

"After its precious soul was departed, I went into the room where it was laid out, and reclined again by the side of it, to repose awhile, and again thought how desirable such an exchange must be. David, at his wretched Absalom's death, was urged by his feelings to exclaim, 'O that I had died for thee !' But there was no need for me to use such lamentation as this for a child that had never lived to enter into the seductions of a wicked world. In my own case it was sufficient that I could utter the sweet plaint of a Christian parent's love, 'O that I had died WITH thee !'

“ The bills of mortality show that more than half the human race die in infancy and childhood. As God, then, gave us *five* children, and has now taken away THREE, we are not to think ourselves more hardly dealt with than others ; especially as these dear little ones have doubtless entered on a good exchange.

“ There is much in the consideration that so many immortal beings are just shown to this world, and so quickly removed into another, and that the number of the elect is mainly accomplished in this way. They are those plants which are gathered and housed the moment they are in season ; while others, who arrive at maturer age, are as the fewer plants, which, being left for seed, remain longer out in wind and weather. What pains one’s natural feelings most, is that we so much miss the delight we have enjoyed in the lovely innocent ways of a thriving child. But even this is made up for, by the sure and certain prospect of what is far better. We do not regret the fall of the sweet and delightful blossoms of our plants and trees, though they soon drop off in such multitudes, because the fruit which succeeds is attended with more substantial enjoyment.

“ Had we had no such child born to us a year ago, it is true we should not have been in our present sorrow ; but having attended it this day to its grave, we are temporally in the same situation as if we had never possessed it. And yet we can count it gain, to be able to reckon one more child of our own in heaven. It, therefore, was neither ‘made for nought,’

nor brought into the world in vain, nor has the care we expended on it been thrown away. And now that such care has ceased, and responsibility with it, we have the more leisure to attend to the one thing needful, and to direct to this great object, in a more undivided manner, the attention of our two surviving children.

"No sooner was its last struggle over, than the little corpse, with ashes put into its hand, was adorned with clean linen, flowers, citrons, wreaths, &c., which, indeed, could only die and decay with it ; and which afforded but a poor and momentary agreeableness to the eye ; but how beautiful must that adorning be, with which our heavenly Father clothes the soul in his own presence, in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of His holy angels.

"Our chief hindrance to entire resignation is, that we are so much addicted to things present and visible, while eternal realities are as yet so foreign to us, and so little known. But could we take one glance at the condition of a spirit thus departed, we could never regret and lament, as we are apt to do, the decease of relatives and friends ; but our grief would be rather on account of the dim-sightedness of weeping survivors.

"Surely, when the door of paradise is opened to let in any of our departed friends, delicious breezes blow through it upon us, from that abode of blessedness. And we ought to avail ourselves of such refreshing influence ; we ought to let it quicken us in following after those who have gone before us, rather than wish those friends back again to a world like

this. Who could ever think of congratulating any that had been enjoying the heavenly rest and security for ten, a hundred, or a thousand years together, upon their having to return back again to the perils and dangers of the present life? Why, then, should we regard it as an affliction, that any one of our number has escaped from such perils, and is only entered into perfect peace and security? If a vacancy has been made in the family circle, let it also be remembered, that another vacancy has been filled up in heaven.

“The nearer we in this world are approaching to the end of all things, the more welcome should be the thought of dying; because every departed Christian finds that the multitude of the blessed is increasingly outnumbering the militant remnant; and because the whole family of God are thus successively gathering in, that we may all be together for ever with the Lord.

“At the funeral I accepted the condolence and consolations of kind friends, as heartily as if I had possessed no stock of these for myself; and thus God, by their mouth, sent me many a good word in season, particularly about the communion we still share in the TOTAL number of our dear children, who are distributed at present between earth and heaven; likewise, about the mutual recognition of friends, whom we shall meet in a better world. As we walked from the house behind the corpse, I looked up to the serene heaven, and my mind itself became as serene as if no such funeral were going on. In the churchyard, after the coffin lid was removed, and the

bunches of flowers which had been fastened to the white pall, were added to the rest inside, I beheld once more the face of our blessed child. The sun was shining with overpowering brightness in the cloudless sky, and I could not forbear saying to the bystanders, as I pointed first to the corpse and then to the sun, 'So will that dear child look, which is now no longer like itself.' Animated as I felt with such a hope, I could easily have taken the shovel out of the sexton's hands, and myself have done the office of closing up the little chamber of rest ; although, when my first-born, our dear little Albert Frederic, was buried, the sight of the ceremony at that time made such a sad disturbance in my heart. But, on the present occasion, I went from the grave into the church with so much cheerfulness of spirit, that I even wished the remainder of the service could have been reserved for the time of my own departure.

"We are now, once more, outside the burial gate, under our own roof, and returned to the necessary occupations of this vain and shadowy life. But we feel more sensibly than ever, that things are rapidly preparing us for the time, when these mortal bodies must be borne back through that gate. Blessed be the name of the Lord !"

In the year 1723, his second son, Joseph, was born, but lived only three months. A third, named John William, lived but fourteen days. On this latter occasion, the sorrowing father wrote as follows :—

"Our John William was just shown to us, and its funeral will take place to-morrow morning. I have

thought more about its burial than its birth ; not because of unbelief, but to be prepared for the occasion.

“The dear babe suffered, during the fourteen days of its little life, by jaundice, cough, and white eruption, with thrush, and died yesterday evening. You have, therefore, quite as good reason to congratulate us now, as you had fourteen days ago.

“It came into this world to die and go to heaven. I know not whether this rapid succession of bereavements gives us the GREATER pain in one respect, or the LESS in another ; the greater on account of the deeply wounded state of our hearts, because we lose them so soon ; or the less, because we are more accustomed to it. We are willing, however, to abide in the hands of God ; let Him do with us whatever seemeth Him good.

“Besides, we have not even yet the afflictions of Job ; we have not lost all, nor all at once, like him. We have not lost seven, nor any of our grown children, nor any when absent from us ; not even two at once, much less seven at once ; nor any by tempest : all which circumstances together aggravated the affliction of Job. And even had it been our lot to bear all this, still it would have become us to arm ourselves with Job's patience ; which we should have found the easier of having his case and example before us, and from our being nearer than he was to the great consummation. Amen. The everlasting God be gracious to us, not forsaking us in the time of adversity.”

BENGEL ON THE DEATH OF GRANDCHILDREN. 119

ON THE DEATH OF A GRANDDAUGHTER.

"The now happy little E. F. I. is registered in our hearts, though the shortness of her stay in this world has prevented us from seeing her. But she was not born in vain. The difference between her own span of life and ours was merely this, that she was permitted to reach the mark by the shortest way. Let God now rejoice her spirit in the company of her little brother who preceded her; yes, let God comfort her now after the time that he afflicted her, and thus bestow, according to the good pleasure of His will, the more abiding joy upon my dear Maria, their mother. More especially, with respect to thee, my beloved daughter, may He alleviate thy days and nights, till thou art strengthened to quit the sick-chamber; and may it please Him to grant to all of us, upon this occasion, renewed faith, love, patience, and hope, in measure ever more full and adequate to our necessities."

ON THE ILLNESS OF A GRANDCHILD.

"December 27, 1745.

"I would add a few words to thee, my beloved daughter. You say you are become in some degree resigned about witnessing the continual sufferings of your dear little one; and well may we learn under the fatherly hand of God. He is doing all things well; but then we must estimate every event, not according to what our nature feels by it now, but

according to the end we shall find answered by it, when we are got home. Let us plead and fully depend on the name of Jesus for the little darling, and for ourselves : and let that great name be a real comfort and blessing to us. Your dear uncle, my own brother, often suffered by convulsions in his infancy. As long as there is life there is hope, without requiring any special miracle. Let us only serve God in prayer and supplication, always waiting *upon* him and waiting *for* him. May He lead every one of us, with His own hand, out of the departing year into the new."

ON THE DEATH OF THIS GRANDCHILD.

"I will now add a word in reply to yourself, my beloved daughter. We may safely say, that all has been well with the precious child, while it was with us ; and we shall go to it by and by. One benefit of its sufferings is, that our remembrance of it is the more dear and tenderly affecting to us. Heretofore thy child depended upon *THEE* ; now thy soul follows after *IT*. This is all right. Our faithful Father in heaven does it out of mere kindness. He may have sent it as a chastening, but He designs it as a benefit. May the consolations of God, which are neither few nor small, be intimately experienced by both of you for permanent benefit. May He cause His face to shine the brighter upon yourselves after this tribulation. Trouble not thyself about the past sufferings of the dear little creature ; she is now removed from

all suffering, and among the spirits of the just made perfect. If the merciful God has commanded man to be merciful to his beast, and even to the bird upon her nest, how is it possible He can ever gratuitously inflict so many sufferings upon our dear little ones? Doubtless there is a wise, good, and benevolent reason for it.”¹

No. II.

DR. LAWSON'S REFLECTIONS ON THE ILLNESS AND
DEATH OF A BELOVED DAUGHTER.²

* * * *

July 1st.—Lord, if thou shouldst grant [offer] me one of these two favours—either all the kingdoms of the world and the glories of them, or the life of my Charlotte—I would not hesitate a moment in the choice, although the kingdoms of the world were a

¹ Burk's *Memoir of John Albert Bengel*, Prelate in Wirtemberg. Translated by R. F. Walker, M.A. Pp. 452-457; 464-466.

² The little work from which these extracts are made is a most touching picture of sanctified natural affection, and is singularly fitted to be useful to bereaved parents. Its author, the Rev. George Lawson, D.D., Selkirk, Professor of Divinity in one of the Sections of the Secession Church, was one of the greatest and best men of his times. The Record from which the above extract is made was found in the Doctor's repositories. It is plainly written with no intention of being ever published.

thousand times more numerous, and the glories of them a thousand times greater, than they are. And I would hesitate as little between her natural and her eternal life. O that my Charlotte 'may live before thee,' whether she live with me or be taken from me !

"The history of the Syrophenician woman, whose daughter was possessed by the devil, is rich in instruction and comfort. The poor young woman could not come, and perhaps could not be brought to Jesus—or perhaps her mother had none to assist her in bringing her daughter to the great Physician to move His compassion. The mother herself came unto him, and said, 'O Lord, thou Son of David, my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.' She knew that Jesus was the son of David, the great, the promised Messiah. But she had not the same opportunities that we have of knowing the riches of the mercy of the Son of David. She might have read these delightful words, but she had not the means that we have of understanding the riches of their meaning : 'He shall deliver the needy when he crieth ; the poor also, and him that hath none to help him. He shall spare the poor and needy, and he shall save the souls of the needy—and precious shall their blood be in his sight.'

"Lord, 'I am poor and needy.' Did I possess the riches of Solomon, I should be poor and needy when my poor child is at the gates of death and none can help her. My heart is wrung with anguish when I behold her lying insensible on her bed, and hear the

physicians say that nothing more can be done for her, and that they cannot give me the least ground of hope. But, O Lord, unto thee do I seek, unto thee I commit my darling. O do what thou pleasest, but let her soul be precious in thy sight ! O give me the pleasing hope that I shall see her in glory at the right hand of Christ, when he comes with all his saints. O blessed Jesus, can I hope too much from thy grace ?

"Tears run down from mine eyes. But thou beheldest the weeping widow of Nain, and didst restore the dead child alive to his distressed mother. I expect no miracles. I am far from ranking myself with these distinguished favourites of Heaven, in later times, for whom God has been pleased sometimes to perform works of wonder that astonished beholders. Infinitely shall I be indebted to the sovereign grace of God, if I am placed the lowest among all the saints of God. Lord, I know in some degree my own unworthiness. But *oh, look upon the face of thine Anointed, and have compassion on us, that my poor child perish not.*

* * * *

"*July 2d.*--I weep for my Charlotte. Who will blame me for it ! *Thou only who knew her not, or who know not me.* The dispositions which she possessed in an *eminent degree*, were such as always powerfully attached my heart wherever I had an opportunity of observing their fruits.

"I weep for Charlotte, and my tears are mingled with prayers. 'I have heard thy prayers, I have seen thy tears,' said God to Hezekiah ; 'I will add

unto thy days fifteen years.' Who knows but God may hear my prayers, and see my tears, and add some years to the life of my Charlotte in this world? Alas! can I say to God, 'I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart?' I have endeavoured to walk in truth before God. I have exposed myself to much reproach, that I might walk uprightly;¹ but I dare not make Hezekiah's appeal. One thing, however, I will venture to say: I endeavour to place all my dependence on that righteousness, by which Hezekiah and all former saints have been justified. My holiness, if I can pretend to holiness, is not to be compared with that of Hezekiah, for I am less than the least of all saints. But Jesus is my hope and my life. In His name I desire to trust. In His name I pray. Lord, for the sake of Him who said, 'Suffer little children to come unto me,' accept of Charlotte. She is thine, save her. I am in affliction, but thou delightest in mercy. O

¹ The reference here is to the part the Author thought himself called on to take in certain transactions in the religious body to which he belonged, which paved the way for two extensive ecclesiastical unions, rich in blessing to this country; and which will, I trust, lead to a third, still more extensive and more propitious. The flood of malignant calumny and scurrility which was poured on Dr. Lawson on that occasion would be incredible, did not "*littera scripta manent.*" The numerous virulent pamphlets of his accusers, are, some of them, still to be met with. And his *Considerations*, which provoked them, though, indeed, fitted to "provoke" to nothing but "love and good works," remains a monument of his "godly sincerity" and "meekness of wisdom;" and a valuable document as to one of the most important crises in the ecclesiastical history of this country. It was in the midst of this "strife of tongues" that these *Reflections* were written.

save her from sin and from destruction, for thy mercy's sake !

" I will weep for Charlotte. Who will forbid me the consolation of tears ? I should think that I did her great injustice did I not often weep for her. Dearly she loved me. Greatly did she deserve my love. But, dearly as I loved her, what is my love to the love of that God, in whom I trust as my God, and the God of my seed ? He does not give her that relief which I greatly wish ; but He is infinitely wiser than I. He will compensate all her sorrows in that land where sorrow and sighing shall flee away. Sweet hope ! Let no man attempt to bereave me of it. It is founded on the Scriptures, on the mercy of God, on the exceeding abundant grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

" Whether God be pleased to spare Charlotte to me, or to make up the residue of her years in a better country, my resolutions are these. O that the grace of God may enable me to execute them !

" I will mourn over the sins which have provoked God to stretch out His hand against me. Let me in particular mourn over the disproportionable share that creatures have in my love. I do not think that I loved Charlotte more than she deserved to be loved. But my narrow heart is capable only of a certain portion of this pleasing affection, and much too large a portion of it has been occupied by the gifts which God has bestowed on me. O that I could love the Lord my God with all my heart ! Never can I love Jesus as He ought to be loved.

Jesus, and not any mere creature, is my Saviour. God, and no man, is my portion.

“‘I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him,’ and will ‘put my mouth in the dust, if so be there may be hope.’

“I will bless His name for the reasons I have to think that Charlotte has been made a partaker of His grace. I cannot expect miraculous discoveries of the happiness of her condition. I rejoice that, amidst many reasons I have to believe that God has been gracious to her, I have none to believe the reverse.

“I will bless the Lord that my other children have some farther space of preparation for heaven allowed them ; and that I have farther space given me to train them up in the way that they should go.

“I will make no invidious comparisons between my other children and Charlotte. With some of them I have much reason to be satisfied. All of them I love as gifts bestowed on me by God, as the brethren and sisters of my Charlotte, who loved them and was loved by them, as the children of my dear companion in affliction, as persons committed to me by God, to be trained up under my tuition for a better world, as members of the visible body of Christ, as persons for whom Christ died, as heirs of immortality, which I hope they will spend with me in the presence of the Lord.

“I will henceforth be more earnest in my prayers for grace to my children, to the rising generation, to my people, to the church of God. ‘All souls are mine,’ says God, and are they not as precious as the soul of my Charlotte ?

"Henceforth, my mind shall be raised above the good and bad things of the world. The best things of the world could not have preserved the life of Charlotte a single moment. How much better would it be to live with her in poverty, than to be seated on a throne, and be bereaved of Charlotte ! If God spare my children and my wife, dearer and better to me than any of my children, let Him give me, or deny me, what He pleases. Should He even take away these precious gifts, He takes away but what He gave. 'Blessed be the name of the Lord.' And, therefore, when he spares them, or some of them, to me, what reason have I to complain ? What reason have I not to be thankful to the God of my mercies ?

"I will be henceforth more grieved than ever for my sins. Am I so deeply depressed with the prospect of an affliction ? God forbid that I should choose sin rather than affliction ! I do not find my tears so ready to flow for my sins as for the feared loss of my darling. But if I would wilfully repeat any of my sins to secure her life, do I not then make it too evident that I prefer something in the world to God ? Christ gave His life, not to secure the present life of my favourite, but to cleanse her and me from our sins.

"I will, through Divine grace, 'look for and hasten unto the coming of the day of the Lord,' when I shall again see the face of my Charlotte, and all my other best friends (amongst whom may the dear companion of my life and all my children be found) ! And oh,

how different from what they now are ! Now they bear the image of the earthly man ; but then shall they bear the image of the heavenly, and shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father.

“Meanwhile I will endeavour to comfort myself with these glorious prospects. And oh, may the Comforter, who is the Holy Ghost, fill my soul with the consolations of His grace !—Isa. xli. 17.

“I have prayed and wept before the Lord ; yet my poor Charlotte is not recovered. She is in a far more hopeless condition than when I first made my requests concerning her known to God. Yet I will not say that God has turned away his mercy from me, or my prayer from Him. Let the event fall out, of which I live in constant fear. Yet I will not say that the Lord is not the hearer of prayer, nor will I even infer that he refuses to hear my prayers. I never prayed that she might live in this world, but with submission to the will of God.

* * * *

“*July 8th.*—Mercy, good Lord, mercy I crave. This is the total sum of all I need, and all I ask. Lord, let thy mercy come ! But let it come to my children as well as to myself ; let it come to my dear, dying child. Oh, this is a time of need for myself and for my poor child, and it is in a time of need that I am taught to expect mercy at thy throne of grace.

“Thou art rich in mercy. There is enough for me. There is enough for Charlotte. There is a sufficiency for us all. The name of the Lord is, ‘The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and

abundant in goodness and truth.' What tender compassions flowed in the heart of our Redeemer when he dwelt among us ! And he is not now less compassionate. I will 'look for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life,' for myself and for my children.

" 'Lord, come down ere my child die !' Soon will she die to me. No more opportunity shall I have to lift up a cry or prayer for her soul. Lord, come down, and save her for thy mercy's sake. She is 'poor and needy : O Lord, make no tarrying !' 'Lord Jesus, come quickly.' O let not my great iniquities provoke thee to hide thy face from my poor distressed Charlotte. Pardon mine iniquity, for it is very great ! Pardon the iniquity of Charlotte, and visit her with thy salvation, that thy mercy may be for ever glorious, and that we may show forth the wonders of thy grace when time shall be no more !

* * * *

" *July 9th.*—My poor Charlotte still breathes, but the fatal symptoms are still on the increase. Lord, turn not away my prayer from thee ! If Charlotte must live no longer to me, let her live unto God !

" I am dying in the person of my child, who is dear to me as mine own soul. But I have this advantage, that through the help of Divine grace, I may still pray. O that I could pour out my soul like water before the face of the Lord, when the eternal felicity of one so dear, and so justly dear to me, is in question ! Too little have I done for the good of her soul when opportunities were given me.

"I can now do nothing for her but recommend her to the tender compassions of Jesus. And oh, what reason have I to be thankful that the history of His life and death affords so many and so cheering instances of His compassion to the distressed, and of His compassion, in particular, to those who supplicated His mercy for their children and for their enemies !

"He compassionated the hungry, and fed them by miracles which He did not work for Himself when He was an-hungered. He compassionated the sick, and healed them. He pitied those who were possessed by devils, and cast them out. He compassionated those who were like sheep without a shepherd, and enjoined his disciples to pray that God would raise them up pastors. Lord, my Charlotte is now like a lamb that has neither dam nor shepherd to take care of her ; for all our care, all that friends, all that physicians can do, is nothing. Be thou our shepherd, oh thou that gatherest the lambs with thine arms, and carriest them in thy bosom, that gently leadest those that are with young !

"Christ's kindness to the lambs of his flock is to be understood of his care of the young. His kindness to the ewes with young signifies his tender care of those who are loaded with distress. Has not my Charlotte both these claims to the compassions of Him who 'feeds His flock like a shepherd ?' She is a young disciple. She is loaded with trouble, and with trouble that excludes all possibility of benefit to her soul from men.

"All that we can do for her is to pray for her, in

her helpless case. But to pray aright for her is to do much. At the voice of prayer God has often delivered men from death. When continual prayer was made by the church for Peter in the prison, an angel was sent to open the prison doors.

“Angels, though unseen by us, are still ‘ministering spirits to them who shall be the heirs of salvation.’ Who knows what angels, at the command of God, may do for my poor Charlotte? This at least they will do when her soul is released from the prison of her body. They will carry it into Abraham’s bosom to be ever with the Lord. With what joy did she often hear me narrating stories of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, and Joseph and Elijah and Elisha, and of Peter and Paul, and of Jesus himself! With what unknown transports of pleasure will she be filled when she enters into such blissful society, and is herself one of them! But can I indulge the cheering hope that my Charlotte is soon to be a companion of angels, and of the spirits of the just made perfect? Yes, I will not renounce this hope. It appears to me to be founded on the sure word of God.

“‘I would not that ye should mourn for the dead as those that have no hope.’ Who are the dead persons of whom the apostle speaks? How can we know who they are that have fallen asleep in Jesus? This passage surely means, that we should set our mind at rest concerning our dear departed friends, young or old, who have given us all the evidence which in the ordinary course of things can be expected, that they loved the name of our Redeemer.

Why then should we be painfully anxious about my lovely child ? It was not possible, since her illness appeared dangerous, that she should express her hope in Jesus. But I have always been of opinion, that much more stress is to be laid upon the course of a person's behaviour than upon deathbed expressions of hope, when we form an opinion of their real character. It is by the doings of a child, as Solomon informs us, that we are to know 'whether his work be pure, and whether it be right.' (Prov. xx. 11.)

"But my painful anxiety, although it would be dreadful, were it to continue with me through life, is not without its use at present. It awakens my desires, and fills my mouth with arguments at the throne of God. I will venture to say with David, 'Hear my prayer, O Lord, and give ear unto my cry. Hold not thy peace at my tears, for I am a stranger with thee and a sojourner, as all my fathers were. O spare me' by sparing my beloved child, 'that she may recover strength before she go hence, to be no more.'

"Her fever is extreme, and is greatly on the increase. More than one physician have told me that nothing can be done for abating this symptom, or, indeed, any other symptom of her distress. May I not again use the words of David, 'I looked on my right hand and beheld, but there was no man that would know me ; refuge failed me ; no man cared for my soul' (or no man's care availed me) ? 'I cried unto thee, O Lord. I said, Thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living. Attend unto my cry, for I am brought very low.'

“But do I forget that I am forbidden to hope for her life, or that miracles will not be wrought for me? Let her soul be safe in the hands of Jesus. Enable me, O Lord, with my whole heart, to commit her spirit to Him who never disappointed any who trusted in Him, to Him who spared not Himself, that we might be saved from perdition. If Jesus graciously pitied those who solicited bodily health from Him to their children, will He not show his pity to me when I seek the eternal salvation of my dearest child? It was to procure eternal salvation, not the continuance of natural life, that He poured out His soul unto death.

“‘All flesh is grass; and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field.’ The voice of God now proclaims this truth in sounds louder than thunder. I feel it in my heart. ‘But the word of our God shall stand for ever.’ And have not I the word of God for my encouragement, to pray for Charlotte in the hope of being heard? ‘Trust in him *at all times*,’ say the inspired oracles; ‘pour ye out your hearts before him: God is a refuge for us.’

“God is the father of the fatherless. My poor child is in a condition no better than fatherless. Her fond father cannot help her. He can procure no help for her. Nothing is left for him but to commit her to the compassions of Him, in whom the fatherless findeth mercy, and to solicit for her the help of the prayers of other Christians.

“Paul himself hoped for much good from the help given him, by the prayers of other Christians. Many have joined in prayer for Charlotte. She was men-

tioned amongst others, for whom the prayers of our congregation were desired. Surely there were some amongst these petitioners, whose prayers came up with acceptance before God in the name of Christ.

"But my dependence is placed on the Great High Priest, 'who ever liveth to make intercession for us.' Many are my sins, and justly might God turn away His ear with indignation from the prayers which distress extorts. But it is Christ that died for my sins, 'yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.'

"In the name of Christ I will pray, because I shall be heard. 'Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, I will do it for you, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.' Lord, wilt thou not be glorified in Christ, in the salvation of my dear infant? Loud and triumphant will our songs of praise be, when we meet together in the regions of bliss. Her heaven will be mine too."

* * * *

"*July 15th.*—'To comfort those who are broken in spirit, is no less a Divine work than to raise the dead,' said Luther. I must therefore pray and look for the grace of the Spirit to enlighten my mind in those precious truths which are revealed to comfort the dejected spirit, and to apply them with irresistible efficacy to my heart.

"I find myself often disposed to say, 'I will go to the grave, mourning, to my daughter.' But if God would be pleased to give me the joys of His salvation,

and uphold me with His free Spirit, peace and gladness would fill my soul, and I would yet be fitted for those joyful exercises of religion which are so often required in the Bible, so well becoming those who are redeemed by the Lord, so honourable to the Christian profession, and so necessary as expressions of thankfulness to the God of our mercies.

“ ‘I will put my Spirit within you,’ says God, ‘and ye shall walk in my statutes.’ The spirit of consolation, as well as of sanctification, is necessary to enable us to walk in God’s statutes. How can we live a life of thankful obedience, which the whole Christian life ought to be, unless we can rejoice in the goodness of the Lord? Can we pray for Divine blessings without a disposition to relish them? And this disposition is greatly obstructed by dejection of mind. With respect to many of them it is almost totally destroyed.

“ If I expect the comforts of the Spirit, I must beware of grieving Him by wrong conduct under affliction, or by the neglect of those duties which a state of affliction requires, or of other duties from which affliction gives us no dispensation.

“ Death, I hope, when it comes, will be so much the less dreaded by me, that Charlotte and others whom I dearly loved, are already in another world. Death alone can join me again to their society, and others who deserve my love will not tarry long after me in this world.

“ From henceforth let me be more active in the discharge of all the duties of life, that my death, if

it should come suddenly, may not find me unprepared. Let me especially be more diligent in my endeavours to promote the salvation of others, since they may soon be removed beyond the possibility of receiving any benefit from me. Although I should receive the assurance of pardon for the neglect of the duties which I owe them, yet if they should perish through my neglect, pardoning mercy to me will not recall them from the grave, or furnish them with new opportunities to enjoy the means of salvation.

"None of my resolutions will be kept—the good impressions made on my mind by mine affliction will soon be erased, unless the grace of God keep alive upon the imaginations of the thoughts of mine heart, a sense of my duty. May the God who has smitten me heal and strengthen me, and work in me all the good pleasure of His goodness! And may I at last die the death of the righteous!"

No. III.

LETTER ON THE LOSS OF AN INFANT.

*To Mrs. C. B. Rodgers.*¹

LONDON, 1839.

MY SWEET COUSIN,—I have in vain tried to tell a lie for your sake, and say, I *condole* with you.

¹ *Selections from the Correspondence of R. E. H. Greyson*, Vol. 1. p. 27.

• But it is impossible. How *can* I, with my deep convictions that your little floweret, and every other so fading, is but transplanted into the more congenial soil of paradise, and shall there bloom and be fragrant for ever ! How can I lament for one who has so cheaply become an “ heir of immortality ? ” who will never remember his native home of earth, nor the transient pang by which he was born into heaven ! who will never even know that he had suffered, except by being told so ! Shall we lament that he has *not* shared our fatal privilege of an experience of guilt and sorrow ? Is this so precious that we can wish him partaker of it ? My cousin, those who die in childhood are to be envied and felicitated, not deplored ; so soon, so happily have they escaped all that *we* must wish never to have known.

“ Innocent souls thus set so early free
From sin, from sorrow, and mortality.”

Who can weep for *them*, as he thinks of the fearful hazards that all must run who have grown up to a personal acquaintance with sin and misery ?

An ancient Greek historian tells us it was a custom among a people of Scythia to celebrate the birth of a child with the same mournful solemnities with which the rest of the world celebrate a funeral. So intensely dark, yet so true (apart from the Gospel) was the view they took of what awaits man in life ! The custom was fully justified, in my judgment, by a heathen view of things ; and, if it would be unseemly among us, it is only because Christianity has brought

"life and immortality to light," and assures us that this world may become, for all of us, the vestibule of a better.

"You are very philosophical," you will say ; "you talk very fine, but you do not feel as you talk." Excuse me, my dear, I talk just as I have always felt ever since I came to a knowledge of Christianity and human life ; and often—yes often—in the course of my own (and let the thought be consolation to you, for how do you know that your little one might not have tasted the same bitter experience ?)—often in the course of my life, as I have looked back, and seen how much of it has been blurred and wasted ; what perils I have run of spiritual shipwreck ; what clouds of doubt still often descend and envelop the soul ; what agonies of sorrow I have passed through,—often have I cried, with hands smiting each other, and a broken voice, "O that I had been thus privileged early to depart !" But you cannot imagine a mother echoing such feelings in relation to her own child ! Can you not ? Come, let us see.

There was once a mother kneeling by the bedside of the little one, whom she hourly expected to lose. With what eyes of passionate love had she watched every change in that beautiful face ? How had her eyes pierced the heart of the physician, at his last visit, when they glared rather than asked the question whether there yet was hope ? How had she wearied heaven with vows that if it would but grant—"Ah !" you say, "you can imagine all that without any difficulty at all."

Imagine this too. Overwearied with watching, she fell into a doze beside the couch of her infant, and she dreamt in a few moments (as we are wont to do) the seeming history of long years. She thought she heard a voice from heaven say to her, as to Hezekiah, "I have seen thy tears, I have heard thy prayers ; he shall live ; and yourself shall have the roll of his history presented to you." "Ah," you say, "you can imagine all *that* too."

And straightway she thought she saw her sweet child in the bloom of health, innocent and playful as her fond heart could wish.

Yet a little while and she saw him in the flush of opening youth ; beautiful as ever, but beautiful as a young panther, from whose eyes wild flashes and fitful passion ever and anon gleamed ; and she thought how beautiful he looked, even in those moods, for she was a mother. But she also thought how many tears and sorrows may be needful to temper or quench those fires !

And she seemed to follow him through a rapid succession of scenes—now of troubled sunshine, now of deep gathering gloom. His sorrows were all of the common lot, but involved a sum of agony far greater than that which *she* would have felt from his early loss : yes, greater even to her, and how much greater to him ! She saw him more than once wrestling with pangs more agonizing than those which now threatened his infancy ; she saw him involved in error, and with difficulty extricating himself ; betrayed into youthful sins, and repenting with scalding tears ; she saw him

half ruined by transient prosperity, and scourged into tardy wisdom only by long adversity ; she saw him worn and haggard with care—his spirit crushed, and his early beauty all wan and blasted ; worse still, she saw him *thrice* stricken with that very shaft which she had so dreaded to feel but once, and mourned to think that her prayers had prevailed to prevent her own sorrows only to multiply his ; worst of all, she saw him, as she thought, in a darkened chamber, kneeling beside a coffin, in which youth and beauty slept their last sleep ; and, as it seemed, her own image stood beside him, and uttered unheeded love to a sorrow that “refused to be comforted ;” and, as she gazed on that face of stony despair, she seemed to hear a voice which said, ‘If thou *wilt* have thy floweret of earth unfold on earth, thou must not wonder at bleak winters and inclement skies. *I* would have transplanted it to a more genial clime ; but thou wouldst not.’ And with a cry of terror she awoke.

She turned to the sleeping figure before her, and, sobbing, *hoped* it was sleeping its last sleep. She listened for his breathing—she heard none ; she lifted the taper to his lips—the flame wavered not ; he had indeed passed away while she dreamed that he lived ; and she rose from her knees and was COMFORTED.

“Ah !” you will say, “these sorrows could *never* have been the lot of *my* sweet child !” It is hard to set one’s logic against a mother’s love ; I can only remind you, my dear cousin, that it has been the *lot*

of thousands whose mothers, as their little ones crowed and laughed in their arms in childish happiness, would have sworn to the same impossibility. But for *you*—you *know* what they could only believe—that it *is* an impossibility. Nay, I might hint at yet profounder consolation ; if, indeed, there ever existed a mother who could fancy that in the case of her *own* child, it could ever be needed. Yet *facts* sufficiently show us, that what the dreaming mother saw,—errors retrieved, sins committed but repented of, and sorrows that taught wisdom,—are not always seen, and that children may, in spite of all, persist in exploring the path of evil—‘deeper and deeper still !’ With the shadow of uncertainty whether it may not be so with my child, is there no consolation in thinking that even that shadow has passed away ? For aught we know, many and many a mother may hereafter hear her lost darling say,—“Sweet mother, I was taken from you for a *little* while, only that I might abide with you for ever !”

Remember Coleridge’s “Epitaph on an Infant,” and let it console you :—

“ Ere sin could blight or sorrow fade,
Death came with friendly care,
The opening bud to heaven convey’d,
And bade it blossom there.”

Ever yours affectionately,

R. E. H. G.

IV.

A MOTHER'S LAMENT
ON THE DEATH OF HER INFANT DAUGHTER.

MONTGOMERY.

I LOVED thee, daughter of my heart !
My child ! I loved thee dearly :
And though we only met to part,
How sweetly ! how severely !
Nor life nor death can sever
My soul from thine for ever.

Thy days, my little one, were few ;
An angel's morning visit,
That came and vanish'd with the dew ;
'Twas here, 'tis gone, where is it ?
Yet didst thou leave behind thee
A clue for love to find thee.

The eye, the lip, the cheek, the brow,
The hands stretch'd forth in gladness,
All life, joy, rapture, beauty now,
Then dashed with infant sadness ;
Till brightening by transition
Returned the fairy vision :

Where are they now ? those smiles, those tears ?
Thy mother's darling treasure ?

She sees them still, and still she hears
Thy tones of pain or pleasure,
To her quick pulse revealing
Unutterable feeling.

Hush'd in a moment on her breast,
Life at the well-spring drinking ;
Then cradled on her lap to rest,
In rosy slumber sinking.
Thy dreams—no thought can guess them ;
And mine—no tongue express them.

For then this waking eye could see,
In many a vain vagary,
The things that never were to be
In imaginations airy ;
Fond hopes that mothers cherish,
Like still-born babes, to perish.

Mine perish'd on thy early bier ;
No,—changed to forms more glorious,
They flourish in a higher sphere,
O'er time and death victorious ;
Yet would these arms have chain'd thee,
And long from Heaven detain'd thee.

O child ! my last, my youngest love,
The crown of every other !
Though thou art born in heaven above,
I am thine only mother ;

Nor will affection let me
Believe thou can'st forget me.

Then, thou in heaven, and I on earth,
May this one hope delight us—
That thou wilt hail my second birth,
When death shall reunite us,
Where worlds no more can sever
Parent and child for ever.

No. V.

THY LOST ONE.—M. HOWITT.

We meet around the board,—thou art not there ;
Over our household joys hath pass'd a gloom ;
Beside the fire we see thy empty chair,
And miss thy sweet voice in the silent room.
What hopeless longings after thee arise !
Even for the touch of thy small hand I pine ;
And for the sound of thy dear little feet.
Alas ! tears dim my eyes,
Meeting in every place some joy of thine,
Or when fair children pass me on the street.

Beauty was on thy cheek, and thou didst seem
A privileged being, charter'd from decay ;
And thy free spirit, like a mountain stream
That had no ebb, kept on its cheerful way ;

Thy laugh was like the inspiring breath of spring
That thrills the heart, and cannot be unfehl.

The sun, the moon, the green leaves, and the
flowers,

And every living thing,

Were a strong joy to thee : thy spirit dwelt
Gladly in life, rejoicing in its powers.

Oh ! what has death to do with one like thee.

Thou young and loving one, whose soul did cling
Even as the ivy clings unto the tree,

To those that loved thee ! Thou whose tears would
spring,

Dreading a short day's absence ; didst thou go
Alone to the far world unseen,¹

Solving each awful untried mystery,

The dread unknown to know ;

To be where mortal traveller hath not been,

Whence welcome tidings cannot come from thee ?

My happy child—I murmur not that death

Over thy young and buoyant frame hath power.

In yon bright land love never perisheth,

Hope may not mock, nor grief the heart devour ;

The beautiful are round thee : thou dost keep
Within the eternal presence ; and no more

May'st death, or pain, or separation dread.

Thy bright eyes cannot weep,

Nor they with whom thou art thy loss deplore ;

For ye are of the living, not the dead.

¹ " The land that is far off."—ISAIAH.

Thou Dweller with th' unseen, who hast explored
The immense unknown : thou, to whom death and
heaven
Are mysteries no more, whose soul is stored
With knowledge for which man has vainly striven ;
Beloved child, O when shall I lie down
With thee beneath fair trees that cannot fade ?
When from the immortal rivers quench my thirst ?
Life's journey speedeth on ;
Yet for a little while we walk in shade ;
By death the cloud is all disperst,
Then o'er the hills of heaven the eternal day doth
burst.

FINIS.

I.—WORKS WRITTEN BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

- I. STRICTURES ON MR. YATES' VINDICATION OF UNITARIANISM.
8vo. 2s. 6d. 1814.
- II. THE DANGER OF OPPOSING CHRISTIANITY, AND THE CERTAINTY OF ITS FINAL TRIUMPH: A SERMON preached before the Edinburgh Missionary Society, on Tuesday, the 2d of April 1816. 8vo. 1s. 6d.
- III. DISCOURSES SUITED TO THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER. Third Edition. 8vo. 8s. 1816.
- IV. A TRIBUTE TO THE MEMORY OF A VERY DEAR CHRISTIAN FRIEND. Third Edition. 18mo. 1s. 6d. 1816.
- V. ON RELIGION, AND THE MEANS OF ATTAINING IT. Sixth Edition. 18mo. 1s. 6d. 1818.
- VI. REMARKS ON THE PLANS AND PUBLICATIONS OF ROBERT OWEN, ESQ. OF NEW LANARK. 8vo. 1s. 8d. 1818.
- VII. NOTES ON AN EXCURSION INTO THE HIGHLANDS OF SCOTLAND, AUTUMN 1818. 18mo. 1s. 1818.
- VIII. ON THE STATE OF SCOTLAND, IN REFERENCE TO THE MEANS OF RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION: A SERMON preached at the opening of the Associate Synod, on Tuesday, the 27th of April 1819. 8vo. 1s. 6d. 1819.
- IX. ON THE DUTY OF PECUNIARY CONTRIBUTION TO RELIGIOUS PURPOSES: A SERMON preached before the London Missionary Society, on Thursday, May 10, 1821. Third Edition. 18mo. 1s.
- X. STATEMENT OF THE CLAIMS OF THE BRITISH AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY ON THE SUPPORT OF THE CHRISTIAN PUBLIC: With an Appendix. 8vo. 1s. 6d.
- XI. SERMON OCCASIONED BY THE DEATH OF THE REV. JAMES HALL, D.D., EDINBURGH. 8vo. 1s. 6d. 1826.
- XII. THE LAW OF CHRIST RESPECTING CIVIL OBEDIENCE, ESPECIALLY IN THE PAYMENT OF TRIBUTE; with an Appendix of Notes: to which are added Two Addresses on the Voluntary Church Question. Third Edition. 8vo. 10s. 6d.

WORKS WRITTEN BY THE AUTHOR.

- XIII. THE UNITED SECESSION CHURCH VINDICATED FROM THE CHARGE, made by JAMES A. HALDANE, ESQ., OF SANCTIONING INDISCRIMINATE ADMISSION TO COMMUNION. 8vo. 4d.
- XIV. WHAT OUGHT THE SCOTTISH DISSENTERS TO DO IN THE PRESENT CRISIS? 8vo. 6d.
- XV. OPINIONS ON FAITH, DIVINE INFLUENCE, HUMAN INABILITY, THE DESIGN AND EFFECT OF THE DEATH OF CHRIST, ASSURANCE, AND THE SONSHIP OF CHRIST. Second Edition, with Additional Notes. 12mo. 8d.
- XVI. HINTS TO STUDENTS OF DIVINITY: An Address at the Opening of the United Secession Theological Seminary, August 3, 1841. Foolscep 8vo. 1s. 6d.
- XVII. MEMORIAL OF MRS. MARGARET FISHER BROWN. Fcp. 8vo. 1841.
- XVIII. STATEMENT ON CERTAIN DOCTRINAL POINTS; made October 5th, 1843, before the United Associate Synod, at their request. 12mo. 9d.
- XIX. THE FRIENDSHIP OF CHRIST AND HIS PEOPLE INDISOLUBLE: A SERMON on the Death of the Rev. JOHN MITCHELL, D.D., Glasgow. 8vo. 1s.
- XX. THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY, AND THE CHARACTER OF ITS OCCUPANTS, WORTHY AND UNWORTHY: A SERMON on the Death of the Rev. ROBERT BALMER, D.D., Berwick-upon-Tweed. 8vo. 1s. 6d.
- XXI. THE PRESENT CONDITION OF THEM THAT ARE ASLEEP IN CHRIST: A SERMON on the Death of the Rev. HUGH HEUGH, D.D., Glasgow. 8vo. 1s. 6d.
- XXII. HEAVEN: A SERMON on the Death of the Rev. JAMES PEDDIE, D.D., Edinburgh. 8vo. 1s.
- XXIII. STATEMENT MADE, April 1, 1845, BEFORE THE UNITED ASSOCIATE PRESBYTERY OF EDINBURGH, ON ASKING THEIR ADVICE. Second Edition. 12mo. 4d.
- XXIV. COMFORTABLE WORDS FOR CHRISTIAN PARENTS BE-
REAVED OF LITTLE CHILDREN. Third Edition. 18mo.
1858.

WORKS WRITTEN BY THE AUTHOR.

- XXV. BARNABAS; OR, THE CHRISTIANLY GOOD MAN: In Three Discourses. Second Edition. Fcp. 8vo. 1s.
- XXVI. EXPOSITORY DISCOURSES ON THE FIRST EPISTLE OF THE APOSTLE PETER. In Two Volumes. Second Edition. £1, 1s.
- XXVII. DISCOURSES AND SAYINGS OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST: Illustrated in a Series of Expositions. In Three Volumes. Second Edition. 8vo. £1, 11s. 6d.
- XXVIII. HINTS ON THE LORD'S SUPPER, AND THOUGHTS FOR THE LORD'S TABLE. Foolscap 8vo. 2s.
- XXIX. AN EXPOSITION OF OUR LORD'S INTERCESSORY PRAYER; with a Discourse on the Relation of our Lord's Intercession to the Conversion of the World. 8vo. 7s.
- XXX. THE RESURRECTION OF LIFE: An Exposition of 1 Cor. xv.; with a Discourse on the Resurrection of Christ. 8vo. 8s.
- XXXI. THE SUFFERINGS AND GLORIES OF THE MESSIAH: An Exposition of Psalm xviii. and Isaiah liii. 8vo. 7s.
- XXXII. AN EXPOSITION OF THE EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS. 8vo. 12s.
- XXXIII. PLAIN DISCOURSES ON IMPORTANT SUBJECTS. Foolscap 8vo. 4s.
- XXXIV. MEMORIALS OF THE REV. JAMES FISHER, Minister of the Associate (Burgher) Congregation, Glasgow; Professor of Divinity to the Associate (Burgher) Synod; and one of the Four Leaders of the Secession from Established Church of Scotland: In a Narrative of his Life, and a Selection from his Writings. Fcp. 8vo. 2s. 6d.
- XXXV. THE DEAD IN CHRIST, AND THEIR PRESENT AND FUTURE STATE. 18mo. 2s.
- XXXVI. REVIVAL OF RELIGION: WHAT IT IS, AND HOW TO BE ATTAINED AND MANIFESTED. 18mo. 1s. 3d. Third Edition.
- XXXVII. PARTING COUNSELS: An Exposition of 2 Peter i. with Additional Sermons. 8vo. 8s.

WORKS EDITED BY THE AUTHOR.

- XXXVIII. AN ANALYTICAL EXPOSITION OF THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS. 8vo. 14s.
XXXIX. THE THREE GATHERINGS. 18mo. 1s. 6d.
XL. REMARKS ON CERTAIN STATEMENTS BY ALEXANDER HALDANE, ESQ., IN HIS MEMOIRS OF ROBERT HALDANE, ESQ. 8vo. 6d.
-

II.—WORKS EDITED BY THE AUTHOR.

- I. THE CHRISTIAN PASTOR'S MANUAL: A Selection of Tracts on the Christian Ministry. 12mo. 7s.
II. THE MOURNER'S FRIEND: A Selection of Tracts and Hymns. Second Edition. 32mo. 3s.
III. REMAINS OF THE REV. ALEXANDER FISHER, DUNFERMLINE; with a Memoir. 8vo. 8s.
IV. MACLAURIN'S ESSAYS AND SERMONS; with an Introductory Essay. 12mo. 6s. 6d.
V. HENRY'S COMMUNICANT'S COMPANION; with an Introductory Essay. 12mo. 3s. 6d.
VI. VENN'S COMPLETE DUTY OF MAN; with an Introductory Essay. 12mo. 4s.
VII. ACADEMICAL LECTURES AND PULPIT DISCOURSES, by the late Rev. ROBERT BALMER, D.D., Berwick, with Memoir by Rev. JAMES HENDERSON, D.D., Galashiels. 8vo. 2 vols. £1, 4s.
VIII. HINTS ON FAITH AND HOPE, by ALEXANDER STEWART, D.D., AND JOHN BROWN, D.D. Second Edition. Fcp. 8vo.
IX. THEOLOGICAL TRACTS, Original and Selected, intended chiefly for Students of Divinity, and the more intelligent class of Christians. 3 vols. Post 8vo. 10s. 6d.
X. SERMONS ON INTERESTING SUBJECTS, by Rev. GEORGE BROWN of North Berwick; with a Memoir. Post 8vo. 3s. 6d.
XI. OF THE LIGHT OF NATURE, by NATHANAEL CULVERWEL, M.A.; with a Critical Essay by JOHN CAIRNS, D.D. 8vo. 12s.



1



